

LETTERS

17 FROM THE 93

MARCHIONESS

DE SÉVIGNE,

TO HER DAUGHTER

Treat the Dobbyn

Countess DE GRIGNAN.

Translated from the FRENCH of the last PARIS
EDITION.

VOLUME the FIFTH.

She strikes each point with native force of mind,
While puzzled learning blunders far behind.
Graceful to fight, and elegant to thought,
The great are vanquish'd, and the wise are taught.
Her breeding finish'd, and her temper sweet;
When serious, easy; and when gay, discreet;
In glitt'ring scenes o'er her own heart severe,
In crowds collected, and in courts sincere.

YOUNG.

DUBLIN:

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M,DCC,LXVIII.





LETTERS
OF THE
MARCHIONESS
DE SÉVIGNÉ.

LETTER CCCXLVIII.

To MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

Vicbi, Monday Evening, 1 June, 1676.

A WAY with you with my Lady Countess! to have the assurance to desire me not to write to you! I would have you to know that it is one of the greatest pleasures I can enjoy. Upon my word! it is a very pretty regimen you are for prescribing me: but I desire you will leave me to indulge this inclination as I please, since I am always so ready to submit in every thing that relates to you. But in truth, my dear, I take my own time, and the manner in which you seem to interest yourself, with regard to my health, is one of the things in the world that would induce me to take the greatest care of it.

VOL. V.

A 2

Your

LETTERS OF THE

Your reflections on the sacrifices we are obliged to make to reason are very just, considering the present situation of us both: it is undoubtedly true, that the love of God is the only thing that can render us happy both in this world and the other; this has been often said before, but you have given a turn to the expression, which has forcibly struck me. The death of the Marechal de Rochefort is a noble subject for meditation. A man ambitious like him, and with that ambition indulged to its utmost extent to die at forty years of age! It is a deplorable circumstance. When he was dying, he intreated the Countess de Guiche to fetch his wife from Nanci, and left to her the care of comforting her, which I do not conceive can easily be done, considering how many ways she is the loser.

Here is a Letter from Madame de la Fayette, which will divert you. Madame de Brisac came hither for a certain cholicky disorder, but not having found much relief, has left Bayard's this day, after having dressed, danced, and shewed away at a furious rate.

The *Canône* has wrote to me, I fancy I thawed her ice by my coldness. I know her perfectly well, and the surest means to please her, is never to ask any thing of her. Madame de Brisac and she make the prettiest medley of fire and water that I ever beheld.

I should have been extrêmely pleased to have seen that same Dutchesse of yours laying about her in your *Place des Prêcheurs** without any respect to age or condition; it exceeds every thing that can be imagined. You are an oddity child! let me tell you she would live very well where you would starve with hunger.

But now let us have a word or two about this charming pumping. I have already given you a description of it, I am now at my fourth operation, and am to continue to eight. My sweats are so profuse, that I wet the mattrasses under me; I really think that all the liquids I have drank ever since I have been born comes out this way. When one is put to bed, there is really no bearing it, head, body, every part is in motion, the spirits are all in a flutter, and the whole frame

* A public place in the town of Aix.



in one general agitation. Here lye I for a whole hour while the sweat is coming out, which lasts for two hours at a time, without once opening my mouth, and to prevent my losing all patience, I make my physician read to me; the man pleases me greatly I assure you, and I believe he would please you too. I have put him upon learning Descartes Philofophy *, and repeat to him some few words that I remember to have heard from you. He is a man of good education and knows the world, he is no quack I can tell you, but treats physick like a gentleman; in a word, he is very entertaining.

I shall soon be left alone here, but that gives me no concern provided they do not deprive me of the charming landscape of country, the river Allier, the shores and pretty woods, the brooks, the fields, the meadows, the sheep, the goats, and the ruddy country lasses that are continually gambolling over the green. The sweatings, which weaken every one else, give me fresh strength, which is a sufficient proof that my disorders proceeded from a redundancy of humours. My knees are much better, my hands indeed are a little refractory still, but they will come too in time. I shall continue to drink the waters till a week after Corpus Christi Day, and then I must submit to the mortifying reflection of removing to a greater distance from you. I must own it would give me a sensible satisfaction to have you here entirely to myself, but you have inserted a certain clause touching every one's returning to their own home again, that makes me shudder: but no more of this subject, my dear child, it is all over. Do all in your power to come and see me this winter. I must say that I think you ought to wish to do it, and that Mr. de Grignan ought likewise to wish that you would give me that satisfaction.

And now I must tell you, that you do the waters of this place injustice in supposing them to be black; no, no, they are not black, hot indeed they are. Your Provence gentry would relish this drink but very indifferently; however, if you put a leaf or flower into

* To which Madame de Grignan was greatly addicted,

these waters, it comes out as fresh as when first gathered ; and so far are they from parching the skin, or making it rough, that they render it smoother and softer than it was before : now reason upon that. Adieu, my dear, if it was requisite to the drinking of these waters, that one should not love one's daughter, I would renounce them this instant.

LETTER CCCXLIX.

To the Same.

Vichy, Thursday, 4 June, 1676.

THIS day I have finished my pumping and sweating : I believe that in the space of eight days, not less than twenty pints of water has issued from my poor body. I do not think any thing else could have done me so much good ; and I look upon myself now as safe from rheumatisms for the rest of my life. The state of pumping and sweating is certainly most trying and mortifying for the time, but then there is a certain half hour when one feels dry and fresh, and sups a little chicken broth, which I cannot by any means rank in the number of innocent pleasures ; for it is a state of luxurious enjoyment. My physician kept up my spirits ; I amused myself with him talking of you, he is deserving of it. He left me to day, but he is to return again, for he is fond of good company, and since the Duchess de Noailles went from hence, he has not found himself so well off as at present.

To-morrow I am to take a slight dose of physick, and then drink the waters for a week, and then all is over. My knees are in a manner quite well ; my hands do not shut yet. There is one Madame le Baroir here, who stutters in such a manner with the palsy that she is quite an object of pity, but to see her very ugly, far from young, yet drest to the height of the fashion, with a fly-cap upon an half bald head ; and to reflect, that after having been two and twenty years a widow, she fell violently in love with Mr. de la Baroir who courted another woman publickly ; that she gave this man every farthing she had in the world, and that he never

MARCHIONESS DE SEVIGNE. 7

never lay with her above one quarter of an hour since they have been married, and that only to bind the ceremony and secure her donations to him, and afterwards drove her headlong out of the house; what a long winded period is this! but when one considers all this, I say, one has a strange inclination to spit in her face.

We hear that Madame de Péquigny * is coming hither likewise. It is a mere *Cumean Sybil*, she is seeking a cure for seventy three, which sits somewhat uneasily upon her. This place will become a perfect bedlam soon. Yesterday I myself put a rose into the hot well, where it was for a long time soaked and soaked again, and when I took it out it was as fresh as if upon the tree: I put another into a saucepan of boiling water, and it was in a jelly in an instant. This experiment, which I had often heard mentioned before, afforded me a good deal of pleasure.

I intend to send you by a little priest who is going to Aix, a book which is universally read, and which has diverted me not a little; it is intitled, *The history of the Viziers*, in which you will meet with the wars of Hungary and Candy, and in the person of the Grand Vizier † whom you have heard so much extolled, and who is still in power, you will find a man so perfectly good, that I think hardly any Christian whatever can be better, God bless and preserve Christianity. You will likewise meet with some accounts of the great valour of the King of Poland ‡, which are not known, and are truly worthy of admiration. I am at present impatiently expecting Letters from you, and so I gossip in the mean time. Do not be afraid that I should receive any hurt from it, there is no danger in writing at night.

Well! my dear lovely girl, I have got your Letter of the 10th of May. There are some passages in it which make me laugh till the tears come into my eyes: that where you say you cannot find a word for Madame de la Fayette, is admirable. I think you are so much in-

* Clara Charlotta d'Ailli, mother to Charles d'Albert, Duke of Chaulnes.

† Achmet Coproglie Pacha, who died in December 1676.

‡ John Sobieski.

the right in that respect, that I cannot conceive how the fancy took me to ask such a needless thing of you. I suppose it was in the transport of my gratitude for the good wine that smelt of the cask : you was always ready to throw her in a *suppose*, and some other word which I do not recollect now. I am quite charmed that our little lad will have the *Grignan* shape ; you represent him to me very pretty, and very amiable ; you was causelessly fearful of his bashfulness, you make his education your amusement, and that will prove the happiness of his future life, you take the true way to make him a good man. You see now how right it was to breech him, they are quite girls while they continue in robes.

You are not clear about my hands yet you say ; my dearest child, I can almost do what I will with them now, only that I cannot close them farther than what is necessary for holding my pen, for the palms of them do not as yet seem to have any inclination to *unswell*. What think you of these agreeable relicks of a rheumatism ? The Cardinal (*de Retz*) wrote me word the other day that the physicians have given his disorder in his head the title of a rheumatism of the membranes, what a confounded name ! I thought I should have burst out a crying at the word rheumatism.

I think you seem to be very well off this summer in your château. Mr. de la Garde is no small addition, and I am persuaded you think so, and make your advantage of it. Methinks I did very wisely in saving you the fatigue of a journey to Vichi, and myself the grief of seeing you to bid you farewell again, almost as soon as you arrived. But I flatter myself with the hopes of going another year to Grignan, this is one of my wishes, and to see you in your château with all the Grignans in the world, there can never be too many. I have a tender remembrance hangs about me of the last stay I made there, and that bids fair for a second journey as soon as I am able. I absolutely laughed, though against my will, at the news of the sea-fight that our honest d'Hacqueville sent you ; it must be allowed it was very pleasant as well as the care he took to send me news from Rennes, when I was at the Rocks : but

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but pray look out for somebody else to laugh with you at him, you know the vow that I made since that Letter of Davenneau's * which he sent me, and which restored me to life.

What say you of the Maréchal de Lorges ? Here is the captain of the Gardes des Corps ; the two brothers are become twins †. Mademoiselle de Frémont is really very well married, and Mr. de Lorges too : I am heartily rejoiced at it for the sake of the Chevalier (*de Grignan*), the more his friend is advanced, the more he will have it in his power to serve him. Madame de Coulanges writes me word that she has heard that Madame de Brisac is cured, and keeps the waters of Vichi upon her stomach : so much for our good little friend. You have struck the good abbé all on a heap with talking about not resuming your apartment at Paris : alas ! my dear child, I keep it, and delight in it on no other account : in God's name, do not think of lodging any where from under my roof. I perfectly adore the abbé for what he has written to me on that head, and for the desire he shews of my receiving so dear and agreeable a companion there. Adieu my dear, I embrace you a thousand and a thousand times, with a tenderness that ought to please you if you really love me.

Make my best compliments to Mr. de la Garde, and to Mr. de Grignan, especially to the first on his nuptials. Kiss the *little ones* for me, I am very fond of the sprightliness of *Paulina*, but will the *little little one* ‡ absolutely live in spite of the opinion of Hippocrates and Galen ? I fancy he will prove a very extraordinary man. The inhumanity you give your children is one of the most convenient things in the world. Thank God there is the little wench § who no longer thinks of either father or mother, ah ! my dear, she never

* See the Letter of 23 February, Vol. iv.

† The Maréchal de Duras and the Marechal de Lorges were both captains in the Gardes du Corps at the same time.

‡ The child of which Madame de Grignan was delivered at the eighth month. See the Letter of 23 February, Vol. iv.

§ Mary Blanch, of whom mention is made in the Letter of 6 May, Vol. iv.

10 LETTERS OF THE SAME

I learnt that happy quality with you, you love me but too well, and I always find you taken up with me and my health. I am afraid you have suffered too much on that account.

LETTER CCCL.

To the same.

Vichy, Monday, 8 June, 1676.

DOUTB not, my child, but that it affects me in a sensible manner to be obliged to prefer any thing to you who are so dear to me : my comfort is that you are well acquainted with my heart, and will find in my conduct wherewithal to furnish you an excellent subject, for reflecting as you did the other day, on the preference to be given to duty over inclination. But let me conjure you and Mr. de Grignan likewise, to be kind enough to comfort me this winter, for the violence I have done to my poor heart. If this is what you call virtue and gratitude, I no longer wonder that we meet with so few in a hurry to put these noble virtues in practice. However, I must not dare to dwell long on these thoughts, they quite overturn that tranquillity which is enjoined those who repair to this place. Let me intreat of you to consider yourself as settled in my house as usual, and be assured that it is the thing in the world I the most ardently wish for.

You are uneasy you say about my being pumped ; my dearest child, I have suffered it now for eight mornings successively ; it made me sweat profusely, which is precisely what is required of it ; and it has been so far from weakening me, that I find myself the stronger for it. It is most certain that your presence would have been a great comfort to me, and I much doubt whether I should have suffered you to have staid amidst all this smoke and vapour : as to my sweating, I fancy it would have a little raised your pity ; but, upon the whole, I assure you I am the admiration of the place for having so courageously supported the operation. My knees are perfectly cured, and could I but shut my hands, there would be no more remains of my disorder.

I shall

MARCHIONESS DE SEVIGNE. II

I shall continue to drink the waters till Saturday, which will be my sixteenth day, they purge me and do me a great deal of good. All that vexes me is, that you cannot see our country folks dance their jigs ; it is the most surprising sight imaginable, lads, lasses, old and young, all with an air as just as your own, and an activity and sprightliness in the execution, that —————— in short, I am quite in raptures with them. I give a little band of music every evening, which costs me but a trifle, and it is perfectly enchanting to see the remains of the shepherds and shepherdesses of Lignon* tripping it through these agreeable woods and meadows. It is impossible for me not to wish you here with all your wisdom, a spectatress of these pleasing follies. We have the Cymrian Sybil † here still so bedecked and so gay ! she thinks, poor soul, she is cured, which makes me pity her. I know not what might happen indeed, if this was the fountain of youth.

What you say with relation to death taking the liberty of interrupting fortune is incomparable ; this ought to comfort one for not being in the number of that Goddess's favourites, and greatly diminish the bitterness of death. You ask me if I am religious, alas ! my dear I am not, for which I am very sorry ; but yet I think I am somewhat detached from what is called the world. Age and a little touch of sickness give one leisure enough for making serious reflections, but methinks what I retrench from the rest of the world I bestow upon you, so that I make but small advances in the path of detachment ; and you know that by rights we should begin by effacing a little, what is dearest to our heart. However, we must do as well as we can.

Madame de Montespan set out last Thursday from Moulins in a boat finely gilt and painted, and furnished with crimson damask ; this magnificent little vessel had been provided for her by the intendant (Mr. Morani) and was ornamented with an infinite number of cyphers, and the colours of Navarre and France ; nothing was

* A small river, but rendered famous by the romance of Astrée.

† Madame de Pequigny. See the preceding Letter.

ever

ever more gallant; it could not cost him less than a thousand crowns; but he was amply repaid by a Letter which the fair one wrote to his Majesty on the occasion, which it is said she filled with nothing but encomiums upon this magnificent piece of civility. She would not be seen by the women, but the men got a sight of her under the shadow of the intendant's countenance. She is gone down the Allier to meet with the Loire at Nevirs, which is to have the honour of conveying her to Tours, and from thence to Fontevraud *, where she waits for the King's return, who is a little taken up at present with his warlike occupations. I fancy this preference is not very pleasing.

I shall easily comfort myself about de Ruyter's † death, on account of its rendering your intended voyage more safe: is it not true my dear Count? You desire me to love you both; alas! what else do I do? Pray be easy on that score.

I have told you what our Coulanges say, concerning the Dutchess (*de Brisac*) cure, the whole of which consists in retaining the waters of Vichi: this is pleasant enough. You find I knew all about Guenani ‡ at the time you mentioned it to me.

I have just taken my waters, and they are half gone off again this present Tuesday at ten o'clock in the forenoon. As I am certain that I cannot please you better than by laying down my pen,—there it goes;—and I conclude with embracing you most tenderly.

* Fontevraud is but one league (or 3 miles) distant from the river Loire.

† Ruyter, Lieutenant-Admiral, General of the United Provinces, was wounded by a cannon ball 22 May 1676, in a sea-fight with the French off the town of Agousta in the island of Sicily, and died a few days after at Syracuse. His body was carried to Amsterdam, where the States erected a noble monument to his memory. He was the greatest sea-officer of his age.

‡ The natural daughter of Henry-Julius de Bourbon, Duke of Anguien, and of Frances de Montalais, relict of Jean de Beuil, Count of Marans. She was declared legitimate in June 1692, and 5 March 1696, she married Armand de l'Esparre de Madaillan Marquis de Laffai, whose third wife she was. The name of Guenani here is the anagram of *Anguien*.

LETTER CCCLI.

To the same.

Vichi, Thursday Evening, 11 June, 1676.

YOU should be very welcome my dear, to come and tell me in person that I must not write to you at five o'clock in the evening ; but it is the only joy I have ; it is the only thing that keeps me awake. If I had a mind to take a gentle nap, I should have no more to do than take the cards in my hand, nothing so effectually puts me to sleep. If I want to keep awake, which by the way is what I am ordered to do, I must think of you, write to you, and chat with you about all the little news stirring at Vichi : this now is the true and only method of preventing all sort of dosing or laziness in your humble servant.

This morning when I was at the well I saw an honest capuchin who made me a very profound bow, which I returned with equal respect on my side, for I greatly honour the dress he wore. He began to talk to me of Provence, of you, and of Mr. Roquesante, and of having seen me at Aix, and of the concern you had been under on account of my indisposition. I wish you had but seen how much I made of the good father, the instant I found him so well acquainted with certain matters. I do not suppose that you have ever seen or remarked him, but he mentioned your name, and that was enough for me. The physician whom I have with me could not enough admire to see me fix myself upon the good father. I assured him that if he was going to Provence, and should tell you that he had been with me at Vichi, he would not meet with a worse reception on that account ; he seemed to me in the utmost impatience to be there that he might tell you something of my health, which, my hands excepted, is now quite established, and I am persuaded that you would not be displeased to embrace me in my present condition, especially as you know how I have been before. However, we shall see whether you can still continue to do without those you love ; or whether you will give them

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the pleasure of seeing you, where d'Hacqueville and I expect you.

La Péquigni is returned to the fountain, oh it is a strange piece of stuff! she will do every thing that I do, that she may be just the same as I am. Her physicians tell her it will be so, and laugh at the same time. But notwithstanding all her follies and weaknesses, she does not want for wit, and has said five or six very good things. She is the only person whom I ever saw practise the virtue of liberality with ease. She has 2500 Louis d'Ors, all which she is determined to leave behind her in this place. She treats, she raffles, she dresses, she maintains the poor : ask her for a pistole and she gives two. Things that I have hitherto only supposed, I find realized in her. Indeed she has 25,000 crowns a year, and when at Paris she makes 10,000 serve her. So that here is some foundation for all this magnificence; as for me I think her very praise-worthy for adding will to her power, two things which are almost always separated.

The good d'Escar's has reminded me of what I said to the Dutches (de Brissac) the day the Celestin friar was so smitten, at which she laughed immoderately, and as you generally look for some sincerity from me on these occasions, I will tell you what I said to her. "Really Madam, said I, you look close at the father, "you was afraid of missing him." She pretended not to hear what I said; upon which I repeated how I had seen the poor Celestin all in flames: she knew it very well, but never checked herself in the pleasure she took in committing murders.

Friday Noon.

I AM just come from the well, that is to say, it is nine o'clock, and my waters are worked off, therefore my dear child you must not be angry if I sit down to write a short answer to your Letter, in God's name rely upon my care of myself my dear, and laugh, laugh upon my word; I laugh myself when I can; I am a little troubled indeed with an itching to go to Grignan where I assuredly shall not go. You have given me a plan for this summer and autumn, which would please

and

and suit me very well: I should then be at Mr. de la Garde's wedding; I should fill my place very well, and would help you to be revenged for the Loire affair. In short, Grignan and all its inhabitants hang strangely about my heart. I assure you that I perform a noble, ay, and a very noble action, in removing thus far from you. How I love you for remembering, so a propos, our *Moral Essays*. I both esteem and admire them. It is certain, that Mr. de la Garde and myself is going to be multiplied; so much the better, every thing of his must be good. It is still as agreeable to me as at Paris. I have not had the curiosity to ask any question about his wife*. Do you remember what I told Corbinelli one day, of a certain man that was going to marry a certain woman? Upon my word, said he, a very curious circumstance! I therefore make myself very easy upon this head, persuaded that if you knew her name you would have told it me.

I am perfectly restored to my breath; it is now most admirable, the waters and the pumping have evacuated a vast quantity of humours. I walk now like another person; I am afraid of growing too fat again, that is all my uneasiness, for I should like to remain just as I am. My hands do not quite close yet, but a little warmth will bring that about. They want to send me to Mont d'Or, but I will not. I now eat any thing, that is to say, I could, if I was not taking the waters. I have met with more benefit at Vichi than any one, though there are many who may say of these baths,

Tho' soaked in water to the chin
They came out—just as they went in.

For me I should lie was I to say so, for the little use I want of my hands is hardly worth mentioning. Pass your summer then happily my dear; I wish I could send you for the wedding two dancing girls, and two lads who play on the tabor and pipe here, to let you see

* The match here spoken of, did not take place, notwithstanding things were in such forwardness. Mr. de la Garde was son to Louis d'Escalin des Aimers, Baron de la Garde, and of Joan Adhumar de Monteil, aunt to Mr. de Grignan.

their

their manner of dancing a jigg ; the *Bobemians* are quite clumsy and tasteless compared to them. I am sensibly touched when I see nothing performed gracefully ; do you remember how red you made my eyes look once, at seeing you dance remarkably well ? I assure you, that you would receive no small pleasure in seeing this dance performed in the easy, just, and agreeable maner it is here. I am going to think of my Letter for Mr. de la Garde. To-morrow I set out from hence, and then shall go and rest myself awhile at Bayard's, and then remove a still farther distance from the object of my tenderest love, till it shall please you to take the necessary steps of restoring joy and health at once to my body and mind, as you know that the one is nearly concerned in whatever affects the other.

LETTER CCCLII.

To the Same.

*From the Abbé Bayard's at Langlar, Monday,
11 June, 1676.*

I Arrived here Saturday last my dear, as I wrote you, word I should. I took physick yesterday in order to acquit myself of all the ceremonials of Vichi ; I am in perfect health ; the warm weather will finish the affair of my hands ; I make the yolk they have laid on me as easy and agreeable as possible ; I walk a little late now, and begin to resume my usual hour of going to bed, and am no longer the poor wetted hen I was ; however, I manage my little skiff with prudence, and if I should go a little beside my course, there is no more to do than cry out *rheumatism* to me, and I presently return to my duty.

Would to heavens my dear, that by the effect of some magic, be it black or white, you could be transported hither for awhile ; you would be perfectly enamoured in the first place with the thorough goodness and virtue of the master of this dwelling, and could not but stand in admiration at the boldnes and perseverence he must have had, to make a hideous and desolate mountain the most beautiful and delicious spot that can be imagined. I am sure it is a novelty that could not fail

fail of striking you. Was this mountain at Versailles, I do not in the least doubt, but there are those who would wager upon it, against all the forced beauties that are there extorted from poor oppressed nature, in the short and transitory effects of numerous fountains. The pipe and tabor here call forth the fawns to dance in woods replete with odors, like those you have in Provence; in a word, here we talk of you; here we drink your health, and here I rest my wearied limbs in ease and tranquillity. Wednesday I shall be at Moulins, where I shall meet with one of your Letters, without offence to that which I expect after dinner. There are in this neighbourhood some people who are more reasonable, and have a better behaviour than any I have met with in the other provinces, for they have seen the world and have not forgotten it. The Abbé Bayard appears to me to be very happy as being so, and thinking himself so. As to myself, my dear Countess, I cannot be so without you; my heart is also perplexed with hopes and fears, and the cruel apprehension of seeing my days pass away at a distance from you. I find time speeding away, and know not how or when I shall rejoin you again.

But I will shake off these dreary reflections, by recalling to mind the greediness and avarice of a certain priest, which was told me when I was in Britainy: "Madam, said the person to me, very innocently, he is a man that feeds upon the small fry all his life, that he may eat the large fish after he is dead." I thought this a pleasant stroke, and I apply it to myself in my present situation. Certain ties and considerations oblige me to feed upon small fry all my life, in hopes of having the large fish when I am dead.

The swelling of my hands is now disappeared, and as I was always in hopes that heat would have the desired effect on them, it determined me to take the journey to Vichi, where the pumping and sweating have rid me of all future apprehensions an account of the rheumatism: this is just what I aimed at, and this I have been fortunate enough to attain.

I look upon myself as greatly honoured by the taste Mr. de Grignan has for my Letters, I can never be brought

brought to think they are good, but since you both approve of them, I ask no more. I return you many thanks for the hopes you give me of seeing you this winter, I never more earnestly longed to embrace you. I am in love with the Abbé for having written to you in so tender and fatherly a manner; he who can with difficulty support my being absent from him only for six weeks, must necessarily enter deeply into the affliction I feel in passing so much of my life without you, and the extreme desire that I have to be with you.

They say that Madame de Rochefort is inconsolable. Madame de Vaubrun is still in as deep despair as at first. I will write to you from Moulins, I have not time to answer one half of your agreeable Letter. Adieu.

LETTER CCCLIII.

To the Same.

From Moulins, Thursday, 18 June, 1676.

SINCE you will have me remove farther from you, and grow weary of an answer in four days, alas! my dear child, your poor mother will comply, but this is not to be done without suffering the most sensible grief, and making all the reflections which we have already made together on the laws we are obliged to impose on ourselves, and the torments we voluntarily suffer by giving the preference to duty over inclination, I am a striking example of this. But I must own to you, my dear, that my sorrow is somewhat alleviated by the hopes I carry with me of seeing you this winter.

Ruyter is dead; let the Dutch regret his loss, it proves the means of giving you more liberty. Coasting voyages are disagreeable, and that which Mr. de Grignan has yet to make, is not the most convenient in the world. We will endeavour to let you rest quietly at Grignan till the month of October. It was that you might not break your sleep that I was against your coming to me at Vichi, and for certain other reasons that I have already told you.

I left

I left Langlar yesterday. The good Princess (*of Tarante*) sent a servant to me to acquaint me she should be here on Tuesday the 16th. Bayard with his solid virtue could not comprehend the absolute necessity of my setting out: he kept the servant, and persuaded me so strongly that the Princess would wait for me till Wednesday, which was yesterday, assuring me at the same time that he himself would come with me, that I yielded to his reasons. Accordingly, yesterday we came hither, but the Princess had set out by day-break, and had left a Letter for me filled with all the lamentations of Jeremiah: she is returned to Vitre without seeing me, which she says truly afflicts her, and adds, that it would have been some comfort to her to have spoken to me; I was excessively vexed at the accident, and would have absolutely beaten Bayard, and you know what the world says. We lay at Madame Fouquet's, where a very pretty woman, a relation of hers, came to receive us, and did the honours of the house. These poor women are at Pomé, at a little house they have purchased there, whither I shall go to pay them a visit this afternoon.

I shall dine at St. Mary's with Mr. de Montmorenci's tomb, and Valençis' little ones. I shall write you from Pomé a great many particulars relating to *Quante*, which will surprise you; what will appear excellent to you is, that they will be all truths, and those of the most mysterious nature. Bayard is of the party; he is another d'Hacqueville for honesty, arbitrations, and sage advice. He is a worshipper of yours, and beseeches you to permit him so to continue on account of the regard he has for me.

If you receive a Letter from Mr. de Lorges to let you know that people are very easy when they are all contented, pray let me have a sight of it: in the mean time let me tell you this man has gained that by his moderation, which the other will perhaps never acquire with all the assistance of fortune. He is happy because he is contented, and he is contented because he has a right understanding. What you said the other day concerning Rochfort was no less pleasant than just, that in wishing for every thing he had only forgotten to wish

not

not to die so soon. This was a stroke not to be excelled, but there would be no end in repeating every thing of that kind which comes from you.

You desired to know if it be true, that the Dutchesse of Sault * was really a page; no, she was not absolutely a page; but it is true that she was so weary of remaining at Machicoul in that fearful solitude with her good Mamma, and thinks it so pretty to be the Dutchesse of Sault, that she can scarcely contain herself (precisely what the Italians say, *non può capire*). She is very glad to be contented, and that diffuses a sort of extravagant joy over all her actions, which is no longer the fashion at court, where every one has their tribulations, and a smile has not appeared for several years. As to her person it would please you, though she has not beauty, for she is perfectly well made, and has a becoming grace in every thing she does.

I am continually in pain for our Cardinal, for he conceals all his disorders from me on account of the lively interest I take in his health: but that same perpetual head-ach does not please me. For my part I am very well, and only wait from warmth the free use of my hands, though they serve me as well as if nothing ailed them: I am become used to their little defects, and really begin to think that it is not so very necessary for one to shut one's hands; of what use is it? It is a mere joke when there is no one whose hand we are desirous of pressing. Besides, it is a small relict of that disorder for which I have so profound a respect, and the very name of which makes me tremble. In short, my angel, give yourself no farther concern about me, all that remains to make me completely happy depends upon you.

* Paula de Gondi daughter of Peter and Catherine de Gondi, Duke and Dutchesse of Retz, married 12 March, 1675, to Francis Emmanuel de Bonne de Créqui Duke of Lestiguierres, and the same who was afterwards called Dutchesse of Lestiguierres.

LETTER CCCLIV.

To the Same.

From Pomé, Saturday, 20 June, 1676.

YOU still upbraid me with my unkindness in not suffering you to come to Vichi: believe me, my dear child, I suffered more in that refusal than yourself, but it had not pleased providence to dispose things in such a manner as to allow me that greatest of pleasures. I was afraid of the trouble you would have in taking such a journey, which is both long and attended with danger; and then the heat of the weather was another circumstance. I was afraid likewise that this small progress would prevent another; I dreaded parting with you again, I was afraid of being prevailed on to follow you: in a word, I was apprehensive of every thing from my own weakness and love; and know, that nothing but being absent from you could make me give the Abbé the preference. I was but too much taken up with the thought of our near neighbourhood to each other, a thought which has caused me to the full as much trouble as it did to you, and has frequently brought tears into my eyes. Thus much have I to say to you in order to justify the truth; accept it then as such, my dear, and convince me of your tenderness in return, by coming to me this winter. But now let us talk of other things.

I have been here ever since Thursday as I told you I should be, and to-morrow I go for Moulins, from whence I shall set out on Monday for Nevers and Paris. All manner of holiness is in this place, the house is agreeable, the chapel is handsomely decorated. If my poor hands should oblige me to make one other journey to Vichi, I assure you that I will not be guilty of the same cruelty to myself that I was last time. Corbinelli thinks me somewhat entered into the holy idleness, but I do not know whether the return of my health may not throw me back into my wonted rusticity. If it does, I will let you know, that you may not shew me more regard than I deserve.

I praise

LETTERS OF THE

I praise you greatly for the desire you express of seeing the poor Baron * settled. When I get to Paris, I will study how to second your good intentions. Do you not think we are very happy in having such a quiet campaign? I am sadly afraid of a draught for Germany. I find you know something of De Ruyter's death, and poor Penautier's imprisonment. I shall get to Paris time enough to inform you more particularly about these tragical events. I heartily wish your little river may furnish you with water enough to bathe yourself cooly and commodiously, for they have a strange method of bathing at Vichi.

Moulins, Sunday Evening, 21 June.

WHAT an unhappiness was mine, my dear, to receive your Letter of the 17th, as soon as I got to Pome, where I left the two holy women † I have brought Mademoiselle de Fouquet with me, who does me the honours of her mother's house in this place; she is to return to-morrow morning, when I shall set out to lie at Nevers.

You judge extremely just of the *me* in the *Moral Essay*. It is certain, as old Chapelan observed, that there is too great a spice of the ridiculous in that expression: the rest of the work is far too grave for such foppery, but we make a very good use of it. You describe Grignan to me as surprisingly beautiful; well, am I to blame when I assert, that Mr. de Grignan with all his mildness, will have things as he will have them? We may exclaim as much as we please, have not the furniture, pictures, chimney-pieces, all gone at a fine rate? I do not in the least doubt that every thing is as complete as possible, that is not what we boggle at, but where the duce did he find all the money for this? child, child, this is downright black art. Let me conjure you not to disappoint me this winter; I can meet with no inconvenience so great as that of wanting you: no, in such a case my courage would quite fail me; as to my hands they are as yet *unshuttleable*; but I eat,

* Mr. de Sévigné her son.

† Mesdames Fouquet.

and I have the use of them enough not to be at a loss for any thing. I have lost my sick air, and am a *bellissima*, would you believe that now?

You are continually gaining victories upon those of your sex: I am persuaded that d'Hacqueville will send you back your account, for he certainly can never suffer that any one should be the first to learn him a piece of news. Nothing can be more pleasant than what you say of the Marshal de Vivonne, and the foresight which procured him that dignity. The Abbé Bayard is still with me here, and keeps me company as late as he well can. He is greatly struck with your merit. He is a friend, let me tell you, of no small consequence, and kisses your hand a thousand times. Mesdames Fouquet have charged me with their holy compliments for you. Adieu my charming creature, I quit you to go and entertain my company. I will write to you upon the road.

LETTER CCCLV.

To the Same.

From Briare, Wednesday, June, 1676.

I Am quite weary, my dear child, with being so long without writing to you. I wrote twice from Moulins; but it is a great way from hence to Moulins. I now begin to date my Letters at the distance you desire. Monday next we set out from this good town: we have had violent heats. I am sure you have been scarce of water in your little river, since our fine Loire is quite dry in many places. I wonder how Madame de Montespan and the Princess of Tarente have done, they must certainly have slid along upon the sand. We set out at four o'clock in the morning, we rest a long time at dinner, we sleep upon straw, and the cushions of our coach, to avoid the incommodities of the season. I am now become as nobly idle as yourself through mere excess of heat, and I could keep you company in chatting upon a bed, as long as there was ground for it to stand upon. I have my head full of the beauties of your apartments, you have been a long time

time describing them to me. I fancy that upon that same bed you will explain to me those follies which proceed from the defects of the mind, and of which I have a shrewd guess. I am always ready to place, in the first rank of good or bad, what comes from that quarter, the rest I think supportable, and sometimes even excusable: the sentiments of the heart appear to me alone worthy of consideration, and for their sake I forgive every thing; this is a foundation for comfort and reward to us: it is therefore only through an apprehension of a deficiency in this respect that we are hurt by many things.

But now let us say a word or two about your fine pictures, and the extraordinary death of Raphael Urbin *; it is what I should never have suspected, any more than the violent heat we have had, and so I have been out in my account both ways. The physicians term the present refractoriness of my hands, a remains of the rheumatism, which will not readily hearken to reason. But we have warmth enough now to set us right in this respect. I am got into such a train of sweating, that I am perpetually in a bath, and the good body d'Escars does not dare propose to me to throw off my cloaths, because she says, she knows that I am fond of sweating. Indeed I still have a notion that I am cold when I am not violently hot, but this will vanish with the *wetted hen*, which is every day taking its leave of me. We think to be at Vaux on Friday, and there pass a divine evening, but I fear we shall not reach it till Saturday; however, I shall still continue writing to you, that is my joy.

Madame de la Fayette has wrote me word that *Guenani* is returned to Maubuission, and that she is amiable without being handsome: she is sprightly, genteel, complaisant, haughty, and foolish; do you know her again, you who have been one of her most intimate acquaintance? I do not know why you say that story has gotten air, I never heard it mentioned by any one, and it will turn out false as a thousand other things have

* This celebrated painter died at the age of thirty-seven; of a violent debauch, which his excessive passion for women had led him into.

done.

done. The liking his Majesty shews to the art of war, may possibly produce that effect. Poor down-right friendship is much more durable; it is certain that the word *eternal passion* quite frightened a certain beauty of the last age; and as a poor lover was protesting to her, thinking to do wonders, that he would love her all her life, she declared that this was the only reason why she would not accept of him, for that nothing was so dreadful to her as the thought of being loved long by the same person. You see how opinions differ.

There was a relation of the Abbé Bayard's, who was with us at Langlar, who, had he lived in the time of this lady, would have been a very worthy object of her attention, she could have met with nothing like him, in all her travels, he neither says nor does any thing, mal à propos; he is young and handsome, and dances a jigg very prettily, and makes little catches with a surprising facility. Alas! my dear child, you will say I am imposing upon your patience all this time, or that I am well convinced of your love or leisure to entertain you with these trifles. But I have no news. What you say of the king's foresight with regard to *Quanto's brother* * is an admirable subject for meditation. I meditate likewise very frequently on the joyful hope I have of seeing you at Paris.

LETTER CCCLVI.

To the Same.

From Nemours, Friday, 26 June, 1676.

I Defy your Provence to be more on fire than this country; we have moreover the misery to be without hopes of a cool wind. We travel as it were all night, and sweat all the day. Yesterday my horses seemed to express a strong desire of resting themselves at Montargis, accordingly we staid there the rest of the day. We got in about eight in the morning. It is very pleasant to see the day rise, and welcome it in with a holy hymn suited to the occasion. We passed

* Mr. de Vivonne.

the evening at Madame de Fiennes, who is governess of this town, and of her husband, though he, honest man, is called the governor: she came to fetch me at my inn, and mentioned to me, as we went along, the time that she did you the honour of her approbation; you know her air, and her decisive manner of expressing herself, she is most superbly lodged. This is a very pretty settlement for them; she reigns here for three or four months, and then she goes to trail herself at the feet of all the great ones, as you well know. She told me that they expected Mademoiselle de Fiennes, and that she had heard that la Brinvilliers had impeached a number of people, and named the Chevalier de B—, Mesdames de G—, and Mesdames de Cl—, as having poisoned MADAME; nothing more. I believe all this to be very false; but it is very troublesome and vexatious to be obliged to clear oneself of such accusations. This the devil has strongly accused Penautier, who is thrown into prison before-hand; this affair takes up all the attention of Paris, to the prejudice of news from the army. When I get thither, you may depend upon my leaving nothing undone, to give you certain information how things go in this extraordinary affair.

We shall be to night at the castle of Fontainbleau, for I detest the Golden lion ever since I parted with you there; but I hope to make matters up with it when I go to meet you there again. I have been thinking of your journey, and shall give you my advice, which I should be glad you would follow; we have time enough before us, and so we will talk of it. I am very glad, now I find the weather prove so hot, that I left you quiet in my closet at Grignan, you would have been dead to have gone back at this season. If St. Herem * is at his house in the castle and should have learnt any news there, I may write to you again, perhaps this evening; but in my present uncertainty I write to you from hence, least I should have nothing left but to go to bed when I get there, for it will be very late, and it is your pleasure that I should take care of myself.

* Mr. de St. Herem was governor of the castle of Fontainbleau.

LETTER CCCLVII.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday, 1 July, 1676.

I Arrived here on Sunday my dear. I lay at Vaux, with a design to refresh myself at the beautiful fountain there, and feast upon a couple of new-laid eggs, and behold what I met with there! the Count de Vaux *, who had heard of my arrival and provided a good supper for me; and all the fountains dumb and without a drop of water, being just then repairing, this little mistake in my reckoning made me smile. The Count de Vaux has merit, and the Chevalier (*de Grignan*) has told me that he did not know a more truly brave man. Praises of this nature do not come from the *vain one* at random. We had a great deal of talk together (the Count and I) concerning the present situation of his affairs, and what they had formerly been. I told him, for his comfort, that as favour would no longer have any share in the approbation he should meet with, he might place it wholly to the account of his own merit, which would render the pleasure infinitely more sensible and pure: I know not how well he might like my rhetoric.

At length we got hither, where I found at my great Madame de Villars, de St. Geran, and d'Heudicourt, who asked me *when I was expected*, for they were just that instant come to enquire. A moment afterwards came Mr. de la Rochefoucauld, Madame de la Sabline by name, the Coulanges, Sanser, and d'Hacqueville; so there we were all together, sweating till the drops ran off our faces: as for me, I have got such a knack of sweating, that I never know an end to it, and make nothing of shifting myself three or four times in a day. The *worthy* was overjoyed to see me returned, and not knowing how to make enough of me, he told me he wished I might soon experience a pleasure equal to his. I

* The eldest son of Mr. Fouquet, superintendent of the finances.

have received a multitude of visits these two days, and have in all companies extolled the virtues of the waters of Vichi and their salutary effects; and if ever old de Lorme takes leave of the company, the Marshalless de Etréées and I have undertaken to ruin Bourbon. Madame de la Fayette is at Chantilli. I gave your Letter to Corbinelli, who read it to me; it is an admirable one, indeed child you have too much wit when you please to exercise it. Corbinelli is beside himself to find a female brain formed like yours.

But now I shall return to the foolish piece of news that Madame de Fiennes told me at Montargis. There was not the least mention made of Mesdames de Cl—, de G—, nor of the Chevalier de B— *; nothing could be more false. Penautier was confined in Ravillac's dungeon for nine days, where he was almost killed; upon which they removed him, his affair is a very disagreeable one. He has powerful protectors; the Archbishop of Paris †, and Mr. Colbert support him openly; but if la Brinvilliers continues to harrass him much longer, nothing can save him. Madame d'Hamilton is inconsolable, and ruined beyond redemption; she is really to be pitied. Madame de Rochefort ‡ is altered so as not to be known again, by an honest double tertian. The King's return seems to be every day more distant. You have seen the verses which the Abbé Tétu made, exaggeration appears exaggerated in them. The answer to them in prose by Mr. de Pomponne would please you extremely. The Abbé has likewise written a letter to Mr. de Vivonne § much prettier than any of Balsac or Voiture's; the praises in it are not fulsome. Madame de Thianges || had fireworks yesterday before the gate of her house, and set three hogsheads of wine running for the joy of this victory.

* See the foregoing Letter.

† Francis de Harlai.

‡ Magdalen de Laval Bois Dauphin.

§ The Marshal de Vivonne on 2 June, 1676, attacked and defeated the united fleets of Spain and Holland, who had retired into the road of Palerma in the island of Sicilly.]

|| Sister to Mr de Vivonne.

tory. Some scaffolding broke, by which two or three people were killed.

I have seen Buffi, he is more gay, better contented, and merrier than ever. He finds himself so much distinguished from the other exiles, and is so sensible of this distinction, that he would not change places with any one. I fancy he is about to marry *la Remiremont** to the brother of Madame de Canvissan. This is the year of settlement for our young girls. I found at my arrival that la Garde's intended marriage had made a great noise here.

You make me completely happy in speaking with such certainty of your journey to Paris, it will be the last and surest method of restoring me to perfect health: now my dear I will tell you my thoughts of the matter, and shall propose them to Mr. de Grignan's consideration and yours. I would not have you repass the Durance, nor go up to Lambisse again, that will be throwing you too far back into the winter, and in order to save you that trouble, I should be glad that you would set out from Grignan when your husband goes to meet the States; and that you would travel in a litter, and take water at Rouen, and you may most assuredly depend upon meeting with my coach at Briare to bring you hither. It will be a most admirable time for us to be together. You shall there wait for Mr. de Grignan, who will bring you your equipage, and you will have the pleasure of receiving him there. We shall likewise have the pleasure of this little advance, which will afford me no small joy, and will save you an infinite deal of fatigue, and me the anxiety of thinking you suffer it. Answer me now, my dearest child, to this proposal, which in my opinion ought to appear as reasonable to you as it does to me, and now let us say a word or two about Villebrune.

I never was more surprised than when I heard of his being at Grignan. I am certain you interrogated him sufficiently about my illness, which he could give you an account of from me and to the other. He has sent me

* Mary de Rabutin, his daughter, then lady of Remiremont, who was married afterwards to the Marquis of Montaliere.

an admirable powder, has he told you its composition? however, I am not to begin taking it till the month of September. He is very proud of the reception he met with from you, I fancy it was not the worse for his mentioning me. I cannot but admire how chance brought that man to figure with my Capuchin at Vichi. I must own I take him to have a good share of understanding, and a great talent for physic: it is in order to perfect himself in it, that he is going to Montpellier. He has had very long conversations with de Vardes concerning potable gold. He is greatly esteemed by our folks in Britany, every one strives who shall get him, and I know nothing amiss in him, except some few foibles, to render him unworthy of your protection: he was a great consolation to me at the Rocks.

I have heard nothing further of what we believe to have been the occasion of all my disorders, and so I trust that I am quite clear of them. I do not absolutely declare against bleeding, if there should be really occasion for it. The good man's powders too may come in for their turn, when I have made myself worthy of their operation, for at present the waters of the pump at Vichi have so thoroughly scoured me, that I believe I have nothing left in my body; and you may say as they do in the play, *my mother is a stranger to impurity*. I shall just venture to feel the air at Livri, for believe me, my dear, I will make a prudent use of the bridle they have put upon my neck.

One can only laugh at la Garde's adventure; I assure you, child, he was asleep; for you know, *l'amour tranquille s'endort aisement*, the happy lover slumbers undisturbed. Alas! now I mention sleeping, Mr. de Bassompierre, Bishop of Saintes, slept this night an eternal sleep in the Lord, after an illness of five and twenty days, during which time he had been bled thirteen different times; yesterday morning his fever had left him, and he thought himself better. He talked a whole hour with the Abbé Têtu; these sort of *bettters* are always deceitful; on a sudden he was seized with the agonies of death, and we have lost him after all. As he was a most amiable and deserving man, his loss is greatly regretted.

It

MARCHIONESS DE SEVIGNE. 31

It is positively asserted, that Philipburg is besieged. The Holland Gazette says that they have lost that by sea, which we have lost by land, for de Ruyter was their Turenne. If they had wherewithal to comfort themselves for this loss, as we had for ours, I should not pity them so much. But I am certain it would never enter into their heads to make eight new admirals * to preserve Messina. For my part I am happy in their misery, for this will render the Mediterranean as safe as a fishing-pond, and you know the consequence of that.

I have just had a Letter from my son, who is draughted off, with several others, for Germany. This gives me no little uneasiness, and notwithstanding he endeavours to comfort me, with the assurance that he will make it in his way to call here and take his leave of me, yet I can by no means relish this double campaign.

Adieu, my dearest child, the *worthy* embraces you, and assures you that it will give him the greatest joy to see you.

LETTER CCCLVIII.

To the Same.

Paris, Friday, 3 July, 1676.

YOU tell me that it depends upon me to regulate your journey; I have regulated it, and in such a manner, that I fancy you will have nothing to object to it, nor Mr. de Grignan either, as your separation will be but short, and there will be a great deal of trouble and fatigue saved to yourself, and I shall have a little advance of pleasure, which methinks will be wholly my own. I have communicated my scheme to d'Hacqueville, who approves it greatly. Think of it my dear, and make the love you have for me your chief counsellor.

They say that the Italian Princess is no longer in

* A joke founded on the promotion of eight marshals of France, who were created a few days after the death of Turenne.

such favour with her mistress. You know how this latter is on the subject of gallantry; she has taken it in her head; how unreasonable some people are! that her favourite has not altogether the same aversion to a tenderness of heart that she herself has; and this has occasioned strange disturbances. I will procure better information on this head: what I know of it hitherto is all in the clouds.

Methinks I touched too slightly, in my last, on Villebrune, he is greatly esteemed in our province; he preaches well *, and has a great deal of learning; the Prince of Tarente was very fond of him, and owed, in a great measure, his conversion, and that of his son, to his pains and endeavours. The Prince had given him a benefice at Laval worth about 40,000 livres a year; some one who had pretensions to it, talked of its being fallen into lapse on the account that you know; upon this the Abbé du Plessis was beforehand with him at Rome, and procured the benefice; it was against the consent of all his family that he took this step. However, he reaped no advantage from it, for Mr. de la Tremoille pretended the benefice was in his gift, and that his consent was first to be obtained, so that the whole affair came to nothing, only Villebrune, remained unprovided for; the Abbé du Plessis did not act well, and Mr. de la Tremoille has not dared to restore the benefice to Villebrune, who has ever since lived in Lower Britany in great credit and reputation. If chance had thrown him among your chapter at Grignan †, I should have thought you very happy to have had such a person to consult on all occasions, and an excellent physician into the bargain. It is in order to discover certain secrets which he supposes reserved only for the seer of Languedoc, that he has taken this journey to Montpelier. This is the sum of what truth obliges me to tell you. I intend writing to de Vardes to

* This Villebrune was originally a Capuchin. See the Letter of 15 December, 1675, Vol. iv.

† There was a chapter at Grignan, which had been founded by Mr. de Grignan's ancestors.

recommend

recommend him to his protection. See how insensibly I have run into a long narrative.

La Brinvillier's affair still goes on in the same manner. She communicated her poisons in pigeon pies, by which a great many were killed; not that she had any particular reasons for making away with them, but only did it out of meer curiosity to try the effects of her drugs. The Chevalier du Guet, who had been partaker of all these pretty entertainments about three years ago, has been languishing ever since. She enquired the other day, if he was dead; upon being answered no, she said, turning her head on one side, he must have a very stout constitution then. This Mr. de la Rochefoucault swears to be true.

I have just parted with a large company, for you must know I kept my house for a week after my return from Vichi, as if I had been very ill. The company, I am speaking of, consisted of the Marshaless d'Estrées, the *Canonefs* *, Bussi, Rouville, and Corbinelli. Every thing was going on gaily; you never saw a party more lively, when, just as we were in the height of our mirth, who should make his appearance, but the first equerry † in deep mourning; we were all struck dead at the sight; as for my part, I was ready to sink into the earth with shame, for not having taken any notice of his wife's ‡ death, and I had proposed to pay him a visit with the Marchioness d'Huxelles. However, instead of waiting for that piece of ceremony, he came in person to enquire after my health and journey.

The Marchioness de Castelnau and her daughter are extremely tender of me. I know nothing concerning the siege of Philipsburg since what I last wrote to you. Your brother is not yet gone; he does not go to Germany at last, but to join Marshal Crequy's army. This appears to me a second campaign, that is by no means agreeable. Madame de Noailles told me yesterday,

* N—de Longueval, Cannoness of Remiremont, sister to the Marshaless d'Estrées.

† Henry de Beringhen first equerry to the King.

‡ Ann du Blé, aunt to the late Marshal of Huxelles; she died 8 June, 1676.

that without the possibility of being deceived in her reckoning, she was brought to-bed of a son at eight month's end, who is now a strapping boy of sixteen.

LETTER CCCLIX.

To the Same.

Paris, Monday, 6 July, 1676.

LAST night I saw the Cardinal de Bouillon, Ca-
martin and Barillon; they talked a good deal a-
bout you, they are beginning they say to reassemble a-
gain as messmates, but alas! the dearest of them*
is wanting.

Mr. de Louvois is gone to watch the enemies moti-
ons, it is said they have a design upon Maestricht, but
the Prince will not believe it. He has several long
conferences with the King; and it is rumoured that he
will be employed, but he has not dared to offer his ser-
vices, and it seems they will not speak to him of it first,
so they wait for the expresses from Mr. de Louvois
without taking notice of any thing else. It is certain
that a number of victories have been sacrificed to the
manes of the two heroes of land and sea. I am afraid
that things in Flanders will not remain so quiet as you
seem to think. The poor Baron † is at Charleville with
his company waiting for orders; the Duke of Villeroi
is to be general of this little army: they are envied the
sweets and peaceful indolence of Capua, which is one
of the most beautiful countries in the world. As to Ger-
many, Mr. de Luxemburg will have little more to do
than barely to stand by as a spectator with an army of
thirty thousand men, while Philipbourg is taken. God
grant we may not see Maestricht share the same fate.
The best we can do in that case, according to the
Prince's opinion, is to take some other place from them,
and that will be tit for tat. I have heard of a foolish
fellow formerly, who used to say on these occasions,
agree to make an exchange of your towns, and that

* The Cardinal de Retz.

† Mr. de Sévigné.

will save your men. I think there was a great deal of wisdom in this speech.

Madame de Rochefort's affliction rather increases than diminishes, and poor Madame d'Hamilton is universally pitied on account of her melancholy situation. She is left with six children, and quite destitute of any provision for them. My niece de Buffi, I would say de Coligni, is a widow. Her husband died in Marshal Schomberg's army of a dreadful fever. The Marshal's lady has desired me to take her in the afternoon to see this fair mourner, who in fact is far from being so: for she declares she never knew any thing of him, and has long wished to be a widow. Her husband has left her all his wealth, so that she will find herself worth between fifteen and sixteen thousand livres a year. She would by her own choice live regularly, and dine every day at the same hour as the generality of people; but the great fondness her father has for her company will always oblige her to breakfast at four in the afternoon, a thing she does not like. She is about nine months gone with child. I think it will be proper for you to write a few lines to the *Rabutin* folks, I will place it to my own account.

You are quite in the right to trust to Corbinelli's love for me, and rely upon him for the care of my health; he acquires himself perfectly well in both these respects, and to crown all absolutely adores you. I assure you that he handles some little subjects very easily in verse, as he pretends the antients did before him; and is of opinion that rhyme commands the attention more, being much the same thing as the measured prose (*sermoni propria*) which Horace has brought into such credit. Here are lofty words for you. He has written an epistle against extravagant praises, which would do your heart good. In short, he is very amusing, for he has always something or another in his head. Villebrune told me that his powders raised the dead. It must be owned, that there is something in this like a boy playing at chuck-farthing. People may think what they please of him, but I know no man like him for making the most of trifles.

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LETTER CCCLX.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday, 8 July, 1676.

YOU are undoubtedly right, my dear, in saying that the sentiment of affection which would make you set out instantly to see me, if I required it of you, or if there was really a necessity for it, shews me the bottom of your heart more plainly than the most elegant words could do; but as you refer me for advice to d'Hacqueville, you have in that companion and counsellor given me a master. For now I must tell you what the great d'Hacqueville desired me to acquaint you with yesterday, which is, that he is not ignorant what a pleasure it would be to me to face you, and not to condemn myself to eat the *small fry* * all my life; but considering the fatigue of travelling in a coach, in these excessive heats, as a dreadful thing and what might occasion you a fit of sickness, it is natural to ask, what occasion there is for running all these risks on account of an health that is already much better than it has been? I walk about, and excepting my hands, which are still a little troublesome to me, I am in a condition to wait with pleasure till the month of September, which will be much about the time that Mr. de Grignan will be preparing for the meeting of the States; when, according to our opinions, all the duties of affection, convenience, and good breeding, will concur to induce you to pay me a visit, and so we content ourselves with requiring you only not to fail us at that time.

I believe, my dear child, that you will approve of our d'Hacqueville's prudence, and will perfectly well comprehend the sentiments of my heart, and the extreme joy I should have in seeing you once again. I am likewise persuaded that Mr. de Grignan will approve of all our resolutions, and will even be obliged to me for having deprived myself of the pleasure of see-

* See the Letter of the 15th of the preceding month.

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ing you at this time, rather than rob him of the satisfaction of having you with him at Grignan this summer ; after that it will be his turn to hunt, and hunt he shall, and we will receive him with pleasure.

I am afraid your Letter of the 20th of June is either strayed or stolen. You know, my dear, that nothing that comes from you can be indifferent to me, and that, doomed as I am to mourn your absence, your Letters are the greatest comfort I can have. You always seem to be under apprehensions about my health, and your love creates you an uneasiness that I do not deserve. It is true, I cannot yet close my hands ; but I can move them, and make use of them for most purposes. I cannot cut or peel fruit, nor open eggs ; but I eat, I write, I can put on my cap and dress myself, so that I seem to ail nothing, and I can with great ease bear this little inconvenience. If the summer does not cure me, I am to put my hands into an ox's paunch ; but as this will be only for this autumn, I assure you I will wait for you before I apply this filthy remedy, perhaps too I may not stand in need of it. I walk very well, and indeed better than ever. I am not such a bulky creature as I was, and my back is of a flatness that charms me. I should be quite in despair to grow fat again, and that you should not see me in the condition I am in at present. I have some slight pains in my knees still, but indeed they are so trifling that I am scarcely sensible of them.

Well, my dear, what think you ? Do I not talk sufficiently of myself now ? Here is enough of it this time, or I am much mistaken. You will have no occasion to question Corbinelli any more. He is very often with me as well as la Mousse, and both of them frequently entertain themselves with your father Descartes. They have undertaken to make me understand what they talk of. I shall be charmed with that, that I may no longer appear a stupid creature when they have you here to join them. I tell them that I will learn this science, as I have done *ombre*, not to play myself but to see others play. Corbinelli is delighted with the two wills which are found in ourselves, without being obliged to go so far in search of them. In truth, my dear, we are all

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of us very desirous of seeing you ; and wait with a pleasing impatience for that happy hour. I fancy you are quite lonely my dear, and that thought makes me very uneasy ; not that I imagine solitude is so disagreeable to you as it is to many others, only I regret the time you spend out of my company. I have some thoughts myself of going to Livri. Madame de Coulanges said that she would come there to me, but she is too much taken up at court to indulge herself with such a retreat.

The King comes to day to St. Germain's, and by chance Madame de Montespan happens to be there at the same time. I think I would have found another method of managing this rencontre, as the affair is no more than a matter of mere friendship. Madame de la Fayette arrived here the day before yesterday from Chantilli in a litter, but her poor side cannot bear a coach. Mr. de la Rochefoucault is for renewing the journey to Liancourt and Chantilli, of which we have been talking these ten years past ; if they will carry me off by force, they must do it I think.

MADAME is transported at the return of MONSIEUR. She every day takes an opportunity of embracing the Princess of Monaco, to let the world see that they are upon better terms together than ever ; but, nevertheless, I foresee strange disorders in that little court. I have sent Mr. d'Ormiston to desire the first president to grant me an audience, but it seems he cannot do it till after La Brinvilliers's trial is over : who would have thought that our affair should have clashed with her's ? Poor Penautier's depends entirely on her's : but wherefore poison poor Maturel ? who had a dozen children. To me his disorder appears to have been very violent, and in no wise sudden nor resembling the effects of poison ; however, this engrosses the whole conversation here at present. There has been found an hogshead of poisoned wine, of which six or seven persons have already died.

I frequently see Madame de Vins. She appears to have the greatest regard and friendship for you. I am of opinion, that Mr. de la Garde and you ought by no means to part ; what a folly it would be for each of you to keep within your castle, as they did in the time
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of the civil wars. I am very glad that I am happy enough to have his esteem. When you have no other thing to write to me, let me know all your odd matters at Aix.

Mr. Marin expects his son * this winter. I can perfectly well comprehend the pleasure you have in the beauty and improvements you have made in your castle of Grignan ; this becomes absolutely necessary, when you resolved to make it so much your residence. We shall not see the poor Baron at last, the King forbids it. We greatly approve of de Ruyter's last words, and of his having left your sea so quiet.

Adieu, my lovely girl, I enjoy most luxuriously the hopes of seeing and embracing you.

LETTER CCCLXI.

To the same.

Paris, Friday, 10, July, 1676.

Madame de Villars, who, thoroughly sensible of the infinite joy I should take in seeing you, told me yesterday, that she looked upon your Letter, in which you tell me that you make me absolute mistress of regulating the time of your journey, as a good bill of exchange, payable at sight, and which I have in my power to receive whenever I shall think proper. I found the Duke de Sault with her, ready to die with laughing at the news which went about, and still continues to go about, that the King is returned on account of making the siege of Maestricht, or some other place ; this would be a fine step for the poor devils of courtiers, who are just come home without a farthing in their pockets : however, on Sunday next his Majesty is to declare his intentions. *Quanto's* good friend had determined not to come in till the other party had been here ready to receive him ; and if any thing had happened to hinder this meeting, he was to have lain at a place about thirty leagues off ; but, in short, every thing fell out to heart's desire. The friend's household

* First president of the parliament of Aix.

came

came before him, due time was allotted for the necessary ceremonies, but much more to pure and simple friendship, to which the whole night was dedicated*. Yesterday they walked abroad together, accompanied by some ladies, and were very glad to pay a visit to Versailles before the court came thither, which will be in a few days, provided no earthquakes happen.

Penautier has been confronted with La Brinvilliers. It was a very melancholy interview; they were wont to meet upon more agreeable terms. She has so repeatedly declared, that if she was to die, she would make many others die with her, that it is hardly to be doubted that she will draw this poor wretch in to be a sharer of her fate; or, at least, to be put to the question†, which is a dreadful thing. The man has a prodigious number of friends, and those of great consequence, where he has formerly had opportunities of obliging, while he was in possession of his two places ‡. They leave no stone unturned to serve him, and money flies about in quantities upon the occasion; but if he should be cast, nothing can possibly save him.

I shall now quit my scribbling, and take a jaunt about the city, to see if I can pick up something to amuse you with. My hands are much the same as usual; if I found any manifest inconvenience from them, I would immediately apply the remedies that have been proposed to me; but I find myself sufficiently stocked with patience to bear them, that I shall wait in the hopes of seeing you, when your company will cure me of the disgust I have to all medicines.

I am just returned from the city. I have been at Madame de Louvois', Madame de Villars', and the Marshallless d'Estrées. I have seen the grand master §,

* All this alludes to Lewis XIV. and his mistress Madame de Montespan.

† Putting to the *question*, or having the *question* given, *donner la question*, is a kind of torture or rack, used upon criminals to extort a confession from them, in the same manner as is in some particular cases used with us by the punishment of the *press*.

‡ Of treasurer-general of the states of Languedoc, and of the clergy of France.

§ The Duke de Lude.

who talks of setting out on Monday next, whether the King does or not; for if Maestricht should be besieged (as every one believes it will) he says, he would not, upon any account, miss the opportunity of distinguishing himself on the occasion. He is a mere boy on this head; and, instead of declining the service, as his majesty supposed he would have done, upon having others put over his head, he seems resolved to deserve preferment by his service, as if he was no more than a mere cadet.

But this is not what I meant to say to you, the subject has carried me farther than I intended; I have to tell you, that the King proposes to set off again; he has been shut up a long time with Mr. de Louvois. The Prince waits with impatience for the result of these conferences. The courtiers are all of them at their wit's end, not knowing where to find either money or credit; the most of them have sold their horses, every thing is in motion, the citizens are for having the Prince sent, to save his Majesty the fatigues of another journey. The detachment that was sent to Marshal de Crequy's army returns back to Flanders. In short, I cannot say, nor any one else, where this bustle will end.

The friend of *Quanto* arrived about an hour before *Quanto*, and, while he was talking to those about him, word was brought him of her being arrived: he ran to meet her with great precipitation, and chatted with her for a considerable time. Yesterday he was a walking, as I have already told you, but in *trie* with *Quanto* and her *sbe-friend*; no other person was admitted, and the *sister** was quite afflicted at it: this is all that I know about it. The *male-friend's* wife has wept bitterly. It is whispered, that if her husband goes, she is to accompany him in his journey; but all this will be cleared up in a short time.

Adieu, my dearest and best-beloved, I embrace you with tenderness. La Saint Geran has a fever, at which she is very much surprised, as I was at *the Rocks*.

* The Marchioness de Thianges.

She has never been ill, any more than I had been at that time.

LETTER CCCLXII.

To the Same.

Paris, Friday, 17, July, 1676.

AT length it is all over : La Brinvilliers is in the air ; after her execution, her poor little body was thrown into a great fire, and her ashes dispersed by the wind, so that whenever we breathe, we shall draw in some particles of her, and by the communication of the minute spirits, we may be all infected with an itch for poisoning, to our no small surprise. She was condemned yesterday ; and this morning her sentence was read to her, which was to perform the *amende honorable* in the church of Notre-Dame ; and, after that, to have her head severed from her body, her body burnt, and her ashes thrown into the air. They were for putting her to the torture, but she told them there was no occasion for that, she would confess every thing ; accordingly, she was till five o'clock in the evening, relating the passages of her life, which has been more shocking than was even imagined. She has poisoned her father no less than ten times running, but without being able to destroy him ; as likewise her brother, and several others, and all was under the appearance of the greatest love and confidence. She has said nothing against Pernautier. Notwithstanding this confession, they gave her the *question*, ordinary and extraordinary, the next morning ; but this extorted nothing more from her. She desired to speak with the procurator-general ; no one as yet knows the subject of this conversation. At six o'clock she was carried in a cart, stript to her shift, and with a cord about her neck, to the church of Notre-Dame, to perform the *amende honorable* ; after that was over, she was put again into the same cart, where I saw her lying at her length, on a truss of straw, only her shift, and a suit of plain head-cloaths, with a confessor on one side, and the hangman on the other : indeed, my dear, the sight made me shudder. Those who

who saw the execution, say, that she mounted the scaffold with great courage. As for me, I was on the bridge of Notre-Dame with good d'Escars; never sure was there such a concourse of people seen, nor the attention of a whole city so fixed upon any one event. Yet, ask many people what they have seen, why, they will tell you they have seen—no more than I have done, the end of a pinner; but, in short, this whole day has been dedicated to the sight of this tragedy. I shall know more particulars to-morrow, and you shall have them at second hand.

It is said, that the enemy has begun the siege of Maestricht, that of Philipsburg still goes on; this is a melancholy prospect for the spectators. Our little friend* made me laugh very heartily this morning. She says, that Madame de Rochefort, in the midst of her grief, has preserved an extreme fondness for Madame de Montespan; and she mentioned to me, the manner in which, amidst her sighings and sabbings, she declared how great an affection she had all her life-time had for that lady. Are you malicious enough to be as much diverted with this as I have been?

They say L—— has found his dear rib writing a Letter which did not please him extremely: the affair has made a great noise. D'Hacqueville is very busy, setting matters to rights betwixt them: you may imagine it was not from him that I had the story; but it is, nevertheless, true.

LETTER CCCLXIII.

To the same.

Paris, Wednesday, 22, July, 1676.

YES, my dear, this is exactly what I desire; I am perfectly contented, and even overpaid for the time of enjoying your conversation which I have lost, by the happy agreement of the sentiments of Mr. de Grignan with mine. He will be very well pleased to have you with him this summer at Grignan. I have

* Madame de Coulanges.

considered

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considered his interest at the expence of what is dearest to me in the whole world, that is, of some of the precious time I hope to spend with you ; and he, in his turn, is solicitous to do me a pleasure, by not suffering you to return to Provence, and by contriving your journey hither, so as to be a month or six weeks sooner ; which gives me a sensible pleasure, and prevents your enduring the fatigue of the winter and ill roads. Nothing can be more just than this disposition ; which gives me all the pleasures of hope, which are so much coveted and esteemed. This regulation then is happily made : I shall often speak of it, and often thank you for this complaisance. My coach shall not fail to meet you at Briare, if we have any water in the river. The people pass over the Seine every day on foot, and insult the two stately bridges that lead into the isle.

I have just writ to the Chevalier, who was uneasy about my health ; I have let him know that I am very well, only I cannot close my hand, nor dance the bouree : these two delightful faculties I must be contented to want for a time ; but when you come, you will make a finished cure. Have I told you that I dined the other day with Madame the president Amelot, in company with the Hacquevilles, Corbinelli, Coulanges, and the good Abbé ? I was pleased to revisit that house, where I passed my youth, that agreeable season of life, which is so gay and smiling, and when I was troubled with no rheumatism. However, though my hand still refuses to close, I have so well recovered the use of it, that I am very well contented with the proportion of health I enjoy : all my fear is, that I shall grow fat again too soon, and lose the advantage of being seen by you, while my fine shape continues. In a word, my dear, entertain no longer any concern for my health, and think only of coming to see me. Our friend Corbinelli is with me, but he will give you an account of himself. Villebrune says that he has cured me : I am very well pleased that he should have the credit of it ; he is not in a condition to neglect any thing, that may procure him such patients as the Vardes and Monceaux ; he does well to engage them by any means. Vardes tells Corbinelli that, in this thought, he reveres him like

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the god of physic. They may very well divert themselves with him, on this account, and on many others: he is like a frightened bird, much at a loss where to find a bough, on which it may repose with safety.

Let me entertain you with a little more of the history of La Brinvilliers. She died as she lived, that is to say, very resolutely. She entered the place where she expected to have been put to the tortures, and seeing three large vessels of water, this, said she, must certainly be to drown me; for, considering the smallness of my size, they can never pretend to make me drink so much. She heard her sentence read to her without the least tokens of fear or weakness; only towards the latter end of it, she desired them to begin it again, telling them, that the circumstance of the cart had struck her, and made her lose her attention to the rest. In the way to the execution, she desired her confessor to place the executioner before her, that she might not, as she said, have the sight of that rascal Desgrais, who had taken her. He was before the cart on horse-back. Her confessor reproved her for that sentiment, upon which she asked pardon, and submitted to endure that disagreeable sight. She mounted the ladder and the scaffold alone, and with her naked feet; and the executioner was a quarter of an hour in dressing, shaving, and ordering her for the execution, in an abusive manner, which caused a great murmur among the crowd, and was reckoned a great cruelty. The next day her bones were gathered up, as reliques, by the people, who said she was a saint. She had two confessors, one of which told her that she ought to reveal every thing; the other, that she ought not: she laughed at this diversity of opinions between the learned fathers, and said, she believed she might very conscientiously do which of the two she pleased, and it pleased her to reveal nothing. By this means Penautier is come off a little whiter than snow: however, the public is not contented, and seems still to entertain some little suspicion. But see the misfortune of it: this creature refused to reveal what they wanted to know, and told what no body demanded of her. For example, she said that Mr. F—— had sent Glaser, the apothecary
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they employed in preparing their poisons, into Italy to procure an herb, which is, it seems, a choice ingredient in their mysterious compositions; and that she had heard of this pious pilgrimage of his at Sainte Croix. You see what pains is taken to load this miserable wretch with crimes, and to finish his ruin; but the truth of this information is much suspected.

It is said that Mr. de Luxembourg designs to attempt some great exploit to succour Philipburg; it is a very hazardous undertaking. The siege of Maestricht is continued, but the Marshal d'Humieres is going to take Ypres. Thus the two armies seem, by their manner of taking reprisals, to be engaged in a game of chess. He has taken all the troops that were designed for the Marshal de Créqui; thus there is like to be a warm campaign. In the mean time, nothing but diversion is seen at Versailles; there is every day a variety of pleasures, comedies, concerts of music, and suppers on the water. There is always a play in the King's apartment; the Queen, the ladies, and all the courtiers, form several parties; their favourite game, at present, is *reversis*. The King, and Madame de Montespan, keep a bank at one table; the Queen, and Madame de Soubize, who plays while the Queen retires to prayers, are at another. At the other tables there are the Prince and Mr. Créqui, Dangeau, and Langlé, and their croupiers. They play so deep as to win or lose, every day, two or three thousand Louis d'ors.

Madame de Nevers is beautiful as the day, and charms all the world, without raising envy. The Hôtel de Grancé continues to be frequented as it used to be; there is no change seen there. The Chevalier de Lorraine looks very languishing and spleenetic; his sickly air might make him suspected of having been poisoned, if Madame de Brinvilliers had been his heir. Monsieur the Duke takes up his summer quarters there; but Madame de Rohan goes to Lorges: this is a little embarrassing.

Shall I tell you a little news from Denmark; I frequently hear from thence by the Princess de Tarante. I have received your Letter of the fifteenth, which acquaints me with your intentions as to your voyage;

you

MARCHIONESS DE SEVIGNE. 47

you speak of it with so much amity and tenderness, that my heart is pierced to the very center. I am surprised to find in myself such a sense of equity, and so much consideration for the Grignans, as to be contented to leave you with them till the month of October: I cannot, however, reflect without regret, on the loss of much time, which passes away in your absence, when I might have had you with me. I discover, on this occasion, such undue repentances, and such weaknesses, as frequently draw upon me the raillery of d'Hacqueville; he knows that you are, in the mean time, paying the attendance you justly owe to the Archbishop of Arles. Do not you find in yourself a great satisfaction in being capable of doing whatever reason prescribes to you? I see that you know at present, better than I do, how to pay a just submission to its dictates.

I was making yesterday the same reflection you made on Penautier, that his table will be little frequented. I do not know how La M—— will behave towards her husband, but she has never been accused of having changed her gallant; d'Hacqueville could, if he pleased, tell us merry stories of her. The reason you assign for being satisfied with Mr. de Marseilles's being made a Cardinal, is precisely the same with mine: he will no longer have the joy, nor the hope of being raised to that dignity.

They tell us wonders from Germany: those stupid people suffer themselves to be drowned by a little rivulet, and have not the wit to turn the course of it. It is believed that Mr. de Luxembourg will beat them, and that they will not take Philipsburg. It is not our fault, if they render themselves unworthy to be our enemies. What do you say to me from the Grignans, who are at present with you? I embrace them all, as many as there are of them; and I salute the Archbishop with great respect.

LETTER

LETTER CCCLXIV.

To the Same.

Paris, Friday, 24 July, 1676.

I Have this morning seen the handsomest of all Abbé's. We anticipate, in imagination, the pleasure of seeing you, my dear child : this delightful hope diffuses a joy and tranquillity over my life, and has entirely removed the mists of dulness that your absence had occasioned. I cannot but be well, when I reflect that you are preparing to pay me a visit. D'Hacqueville will have me to return to Vichi this autumn, but I am so weary of travelling that I cannot think of it. Besides, neither my hands nor knees require so quick a return ; and I know a receipt that will effect a certain cure. It is certain that I should come to meet you, but there is no necessity for my being at that trouble to induce you to come ; this journey may be better placed at another time. I shall therefore rest in quiet till you come, and shall go and cool myself at Livri. The first president sent me word by Mr. d'Ormesson, that as I now know what it is to be ill, I shall the better enter into his design of going to Basville, to physic and cool for a fortnight or three weeks together. The Queen of Poland is coming to Bourbon, and I fancy that while she is on her travels, she will call at Paris ; you will then have a sight of her, and an opportunity of admiring what fortune can do.

Penautier is happy ; never was man so well supported ; you will find that he will get out of all this, though not clearly justified in the opinion of every one. There were some very extraordinary circumstances in the course of the trial, not so proper to be committed to writing. Cardinal de Bonzi always said, jokingly, that none of those, who had pensions on his benefices, would live long, for that his star would kill them. About two or three months ago, the Abbé Fouquet, happening to meet his eminence in his chariot with Penautier by his side, said, openly, *that he had*

had met Cardinal de Bonzi with his star *. Was not that pleasant enough? I did know a thousand droll things to amuse you with a while ago, but I have forgotten them now; as soon as I recollect them, I will let you know them in all haste.

Adieu, my dearest girl, it is late, and I am not in a humour for gossiping. I passed the evening with d'Hacqueville, in Madame de la Fayette's garden, where there is a fountain and a little covered arbor: it is the prettiest little place in the world for breathing in at Paris.

LETTER CCCLXV.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday, 29, July, 1676.

WE have here a change of the scene, which will appear as agreeable to you, as it does to all the world. I was on Saturday at Versailles with the Villars's: the manner of their passing their time there I shall describe. You know the ceremony of attending on the Queen at her toilette, at mass, and at dinner; but there is now no necessity of being stifled with the heat, and with the crowd, while their Majesties dine; for at three, the King and the Queen, Monsieur, Madame, Mademoiselle, all the Princes and Princesses, Madame de Montespan, and all her train, all the courtiers, and all the ladies; in a word, the whole court of France, retire to that fine apartment of the King's, which you know. It is furnished with the utmost magnificence; we do not know there what it is to be incommoded with heat; we pass from one place to another without being in the least crowded. A game at *reversis* gives a form to the assembly, and fixes every thing. The King and Madame de Montespan keep a bank together. Monsieur, the Queen, and Madame de Soubize, Dangeau, and Langlé, with their companies, are at different tables. The carpets are covered with heaps of a thousand Louis d'ors; they use no other counters. I saw Dangeau play, and admired how au-

* Cardinal de Bonzi was looked upon as one of those who protected Penautier the most openly.

ward others appeared in comparison of him. He thinks of nothing but his play, though he scarce seems to attend to it; he gains where others lose; he neglects nothing; he takes every advantage; nothing gives him the least distraction of thought; in a word, his good conduct defies fortune. He had the complaisance to say that I was a partner with him in the bank, by which means I was seated very commodiously. I bowed to the King in the manner you taught me; and he returned my salutation, as if I had been young and handsome. The Queen talked to me of my malady, nor did she leave you unmentioned. Monsieur the Duke made me a thousand of those caresses, which he bestows so liberally, without minding what he does. Mr. de Lorges attacked me in the name of the Chevalier de Grignan: and, in short, *tutti quanti* *. You know what it is to receive a compliment from every one who passes by you. Madame de Montespan talked to me of Bourbon, and desired me to tell her how I liked Vichi, and whether I had found any benefit there. She said that Bourbon, instead of removing a pain from her knee, had given her the tooth-ach. Her beauty and her shape are really surprising; she is become more slender by half than she was; and yet neither her eyes, her lips, or her complexion, are the less fine. She was dressed in French point; her hair fell in a thousand curls very low upon her cheeks; she wore on her head black ribbons; and her hair was braided with the pearls, which once belonged to the Marechale de l'Hopital; she had pendants of diamonds of a great value. In a word, she appeared a triumphant beauty, worthy to raise the admiration of all the foreign ambassadors. The magnificence of the court is beyond imagination. This agreeable confusion without confusion, composed of the choicest of whatever has a power to charm the imagination, continues from three till six. If any courtiers arrive, the King retires to read his Letters, and returns to the assembly. There is always music of a soft and delicate kind, to which he sometimes listens, and which has an admirable effect: in the mean time, he raillies with the ladies, who are

* All the company.

accustomed

accustomed to have that honour. They leave play at the hour I mentioned, without the trouble of accounting, because they use no marks or counters. The *poules* are of five, six, or seven hundred, or sometimes of a thousand or twelve hundred Louis d'ors. Their play gives no interruption to their conversation; they talk continually, and even of their games. Dangeau is pleased with this tittle tattle; he discovers the cards they have in their hands, he draws his consequences, he is directed in his play by their indiscretion: I observed with pleasure his excessive skilfulness and dexterity. He may certainly boast, if any one in the court can, that he knows the inside of the cards, and makes his advantage of that knowledge.

At six they take the air in chariots. The King and Madame de Montespan, the Prince and Madame de Thianges, and Mademoiselle d'Hudincour upon the little seat before, which seems to her a place in paradise. You know how these chariots are made; they do not sit face to face in them, but all look the same way. The Queen was in another with the Princesses: the whole court followed in different equipages, according to their different fancies. They went afterwards in *gondolas*: upon the canal, where there was music: at ten the comedy began, and at twelve they concluded the day with the Spanish entertainment of *Media Noche*; thus we passed the Saturday. But we came from thence in the afternoon. If I should tell you how many talked to me of you, how many enquired after you, how many asked me questions without waiting for any answers, how many I neglected to answer, how little they cared, and how much less I did, you would own that I had given you a very natural description of *piniqua corte*, the inhumane court, which is peopled by a very polite kind of savages: however, it never was so agreeable; every one wishes it may continue. Mr. de Nevers is the gayest creature in the world; his wife loves him passionately. Madame de Thianges is a more regular beauty than her sister. Mr. du Maine is incomparable; the wit he has is astonishing, the things he says are beyond imaginati-

LETTERS OF THE

on. The Prince made a visit the other day to Madame de la Fayette: The Prince,

* *A la cui spada ogni Victoria è certa.*

How is it possible not to be proud of such a compliment, especially since he is not inclined to obtrude his civilities on the ladies, but always pays them with a just distinction.

Rambure was killed by one of his soldiers, who was discharging his musquet very innocently. The siege of Aire continues. The army of Schomberg is in full security: the little vain glorious hero languishes in a state of inaction as well as others. He may perhaps be uneasy under it; but if he be ambitious of a wound or a contusion, he must give it himself. These, my dear, are very particular accounts; you will either be much tired or much amused by them, for they cannot be indifferent to you. I wish you may be in the humour you are in sometimes, when you say, "why will you not talk to me? well! I wonder at my mother, who would rather die than say one single word to me." If you are not contented now, I am sure it is not my fault, any more than that you are not contented with the death of Ruyter.

There are passages in your Letters that are excellent. You think that I have always a fancy to speak wonders of the *grand-maitre*: I do not deny it absolutely; but I thought you would have taken it for raillery upon him, when I told you the desire he has to become a Marshal of France, and to enjoy that dignity in its ancient lustre. But you seem inclined to oppose whatever I say on this subject. The world is extremely partial; its partiality has appeared even in the case of la Brinvilliers. Never were such horrid crimes treated so favourably: she was not put to the question: they even gave her hopes of a pardon, and such hopes, that she did not expect to die; nay, even when she was mounting the scaffold, she asked whether it was in earnest? at length, her ashes are dispersed by the wind: her confessor says she is a saint. The first president had made choice of this doctor, as a person very proper to attend her; but he was deceived by the persons who
were

* Whose sword is still assured of victory.

were interested in it ; it was the very same they had pitched upon. Have you never observed those who play tricks with cards ? they shuffle the cards incessantly, and bid you take whatever card you please ; they would have you think it is indifferent to them : you take a card, and think it to be your own choice, but find it to be precisely the same they designed you should take. This comparison is perfectly just. The Marshal de Villeroi said, the other day, that Penautier would be ruined by this affair ; the Marshal de Grammont replied, that he might save the expence of keeping a table. The conversation of these two great men might furnish a pretty subject for an epigram. I suppose you know, that it is believed that a hundred thousand crowns have been dispersed in proper hands to facilitate every thing : innocence seldom makes such profusions. Nothing can be pleasanter than all that you have said of this horrible woman. I believe you may be easy, for it is not possible she can be in paradise ; a soul so deeply stained with guilt must sure be separated from others. We are intirely of your opinion, that it is far better to assassinate. This is a mere trifle in comparison of being eight months in killing ones father ; and, in the mean time, of receiving his complaints and caresses ; to which this pious daughter answered, only by redoubling the dose.

Tell the Archbishop of Arles what the first president has sent me word to do for my health. I have shewn my hands, and almost my knees, to Langeron, that he may tell you punctually how I am. I use a sort of liniment, which I am assured will complete my cure. I shall now plunge myself into bullock's blood till the dog-days are over. But it is you, my dear child, that must finish the cure of all my disorders. If Mr. de Grignan could but conceive the pleasure he does me in approving of your journey, it would recompense him for the six weeks he is to be without you.

Madame de la Fayette is very well with Madame de Schomberg. This latter lady behaves wonderfully obliging to me, as does her husband to my son. Madame de Villars thinks seriously of going to Savoy ; she will meet with you upon the road. Corbinelli adores you, and

without ceasing : he takes an infinite deal of care of me. The *Worthy* begs you will believe that he shall have the sincerest joy on seeing you ; he is fully persuaded that I stand in great need of this remedy, and you know the friendship he has for me. Livri is continually returning to my thoughts, and I frequently complain of being stifled here, in order to make them all the more ready to acquiesce with my journey.

Adieu, my dearest, my best beloved. You intreat me to love you ; I willingly consent to it, it shall not be said that I refuse you any thing.

LETTER CCCLXVI.

To the Same.

Paris, Friday, 31 July, 1676.

THERE is talk of an illumination to be at Versailles to-morrow. Madame de la Fayette, and Madame de Coulanges, are just gone away. I wish you had been here ; as for me, after having seen the Villars's, and searched, without success, for Mademoiselle de Meri, I am returned hither to write to you, as this is all the pleasure I can have, till the greater one of seeing you arrives. The good Abbé himself is at Livri, so that I now spend this evening in an agreeable tête à tête with you my dear. All those who have any concerns with what passes in Germany and Flanders, are in a peck of troubles. We expect every day to hear of Mr. de Luxembourg's beating the enemy, and you know what happens sometimes in those cases. They have made a sally upon Maestricht, in which the enemy had above four hundred men slain. The siege of Aix goes on as usual. They have sent the Duke of Villeroi, and a large detachment of cavalry to reinforce the Marshal d'Humieres * ; I fancy your brother will be of the party, but, notwithstanding, he is pretty mindful in writing to me, yet, I know not how it happens, but I have never one Letter like another, which makes me uneasy. I have even put off, for some time, going to Livri, to see how these affairs will be cleared up. Mr. de Louvois has, by his own authority, ordered Mr. de Schomberg

* Who then commanded at the Siege of Aix.

Schomberg nearer to Aix ; and has written his Majesty word, that he was afraid the delay of a courier might prejudice his affairs. Make your own notes upon this text.

While I am chatting with you, I may as well say something of the Grand Dutchess, and Madame de Guise *. They are upon very bad terms together, insomuch that they do not speak to each other, though they meet every day in the same places. The Grand Dutchess is very well with the King ; she has an apartment at Versailles, where she makes sometimes a pretty long stay. She is gone to the illumination ; and, in a short time, her prison will be a court, and a strict attachment to her own agreeable family.

There is a certain rumour runs of Theobon, as if although duels were forbidden, yet a rencontro was permitted ; but this I mention merely by hear-say, for I know nothing about it for a certainty. Your cousin d'Harcourt has taken the veil at Montmartre, the whole court was present at the ceremony. Her fine locks hung carelessly down her shoulders : and on her head she had a wreath of flowers, and looked such a sweet innocent victim, that it is said, no one present could refrain from tears.

You are too good, my sweet child, to speak in the manner you do of the Rabutins ; I should heartily detest them, were they to honour and esteem you less than I do. The Bishop of Albi † is dead, and has left a mint of money to the Duke de Lude. Alas ! how faint-like has our good Mr. de Saintes ‡ disposed of his estate, in comparison with that wretched miser ! here are noble benefices vacant : the Bishopric of Albi is worth 25,000 crowns per ann. it is erected into an Archbischopric : but you know before us that there is still a much more noble one to be disposed of, I mean

* These two Princesses were daughters of Gaston of France, Duke of Orleans, and of Margaret of Lorraine.

† Gaspard de Daillon, uncle to the Duke of Lude, and Arch-bishop of Albi.

‡ See the Letter of the first of this month.

the sovereign pontificat. His Holiness * is at length dead, as we are informed by Mr. de Noyon. I wait for d'Hacqueville to know what our good Cardinal (*de Retz*) will do; if he should set out for Rome, you must leave nothing undone to have the pleasure of seeing him as he comes your way.

Mr. de Marseilles is still considerably behind-hand; the new Pope will promote his own creatures first, and afterwards those of the several crowns, but it is not quite clear, if that of Poland † will be included among these latter, that is, according to the Pope, if they have a mind to quibble, they may say that the crown of Poland has only the solicitation, and, in no wise, the right of nomination, as those of France and Spain; or if it could nominate, who can say that the lot would fall upon Mr. de Marseilles; in short, there is a good deal of time to it.

Have I told you that MADAME of Savoy ‡ has sent an hundred ells, of the most beautiful velvet that ever was seen, to Madame de la Fayette, and as many ells of satin for lining; and that she has, furthermore, within these two days, sent her her picture set in diamonds, valued at three hundred Louis d'ors? I know nothing more glorious than the power of bestowing, and a will to do it, like that of this Princess.

I have just been having a conversation with d'Hacqueville. The King has very earnestly entreated our good Cardinal to go to Rome: he has lately received a courier; they are all to go by land, on account of the King's not having any galleys to furnish them with for their passage, so that you will not have an opportunity of seeing that worthy prelate. We are under great uneasiness about his health, but fully confide in his known prudence and abilities, for accommodating the language of the Holy Spirit with the service of his King. We shall have occasion to talk again about this journey.

* Clement the IXth, who died July 21, 1676.

† The Bishop of Marseilles had the nomination of the King of Poland.

‡ Maria-Jeanne-Baptiste of Savoy-Nemours, who was Regent for her son Victoire-Amadeu. Francis.

Madame

Madame de Sconberg most certainly lives, and esteems you greatly, and thinks you far superior to any other of her acquaintance; it will depend upon yourself not to be *ruined* this winter; however, she is not very well pleased with Mr. de Grignan, whom she has always tenderly loved, because he is truly amiable, and her fair friend loves him. She thought that, knowing she was so near Provence, he ought to have made a stretch of four or five leagues to see her, and offer her all the accommodations in his power, which, however, she would not have accepted. This a kind of amorous reproach! hear me, my dear girl: when the governor of Maestricht * made his famous fall, the Prince of Orange flew to the assistance of his troops with incredible valour, and repulsed our people sword in hand, to the very gates; in doing this, he was wounded in the arm; upon which, turning to some who had not behaved very well, "This is the way you should have acted gentlemen, said he; you are the causes of this wound, for which you appear so much concerned." The Rhingrave followed him close, and received a wound in the shoulder. There are certain places, in which it is so dangerous to give this cruel action all the praises it merits, that it is thought proper rather to take no notice of the advantage we have gained.

I have just heard for certain, that the rejoicings at Versailles are deferred for some days. You are, I find, perfectly easy with respect to the state of La Brinvilliers's soul; no one can doubt the Justice of God; and it is with infinite regret, that I find myself obliged to return to the opinion of an eternity of punishment.

LETTER CCCLXVII.

To the same.

Paris, Wednesday, 5 August, 1676.

I Will begin my Letter to-day by my health; I am very well, my dear child. I have seen the honest de Lorme since his return hither, and he has severely

* Mr de Calvo commanded in Maestricht during the siege, in the room of Marshal d'Estredes, who was the governor.

scolded me for not having been at Bourbon ; but this is all stuff, for he acknowledges that the waters of Vi-chi are as good for drinking : but then you should sweat, said he , and so I have as much as is necessary, consequently there is no occasion for changing my former opinion. He is not for my drinking the waters in autumn, but will have me begin this powder in September. He says there is nothing to be done for the little one, for that its skull will harden like others in time. Bourdelot has told me the same thing, and that the bones are the last parts compleated.

It is a sign la Brinvilliers is dead, by my having so much leisure time upon my hands. However, I have something to say about Penautier, his clerk Belleguise is taken : it is not known whether this will be the better or the worse for him ; people, in general, are so disposed to think favourably of him, that I believe if he was to be hanged at last, there would be some excuse found for him. It is said at court, that the King had his clerk apprehended in the out-skirts of the town. The parliament is greatly blamed for its negligence ; and, after all, it appears that the discovery of this man was owing to the diligence and liberality of the procurator-general *, and that it cost him above two thousand crowns in the search. I was an whole hour yesterday in company with this magistrate, who beneath the garb of gravity, conceals a very amiable and accomplished understanding. Mr. de Harlai Bonnevil was with me : I dare not tell you in what manner I was received ; he talked a good deal to me about you and Mr. de Grignan.

Aix is at length taken. My son writes me a thousand handsome things of the Count de Vaux †, who was always one of the foremost in action ; but, at the same time, greatly censures the besieged, who suffered us to take from them, in one night, the covered way, the counterscarp, to pass a ditch full of water, and possess ourselves of the out-works of the finest horn-work that ever was seen, and at last capitulated without striking another stroke. They were so thunder-

* Achilles de Harlai, afterwards first president.

† Son to Mr. de Fouquet.

struck with the fire of our artillery, that the muscles which act in turning the back, and those which move the flight, were not to be stopt by the utmost efforts of a desire of glory ; and this it is that makes us take so many towns. Don't you think I am a very pretty anatomo-politician ? Mr. de Louvois has all the honour of this affair ; he has an unlimited power, and makes armies advance, or draw off, as he thinks proper. While all this was doing there were great rejoicings at Versailles ; they were made on the Saturday, notwithstanding what was said to the contrary, and were as the prelude to the news of this success. In short, they may make continual feasts and balls for the King's lucky star, joined to the abilities of those who serve him, may make us promise ourselves any thing, without the fear of being disappointed. My mind is quite easy at present with respect to military affairs.

I have just had a Letter from Cardinal de Retz, to take his leave of me before he goes for Rome. He set out on Sunday the 2d instant, and will take the same road as you and I did once, and where we were so prettily over-turned ; he goes directly to Lyons, from whence, with the rest of his brethren, he takes the road for Turin, because his Majesty cannot spare them his galleys ; so that you will not have the pleasure of seeing this dear good prelate. I am under great concern for his health ; he was under a course of physic, but made every thing give way to the pressing instances of his royal master, who wrote to him with his own hand. I hope that the change of air, and the diversity of objects, will do him more service than living and studying in solitude.

So you have got Mr. de Grignan with you at last ; I wish you had treated him like a stranger ; he certainly performs wonders for his Majesty's service, and I take care to say so on all occasions ; for I frequently talk of him with d'Hacqueville, who has so perfectly restored peace and harmony among the Gramont family, that not a word is mentioned about any thing ; they may thank his prudent and wise management for this, for there was doubtless where-withal in the affair to have furnished ample matter of diversion to the public. Your replies

replies to the idle things I wrote to you, are infinitely preferable to any thing I can say. Nothing can be more pleasant than not saying a word to Mr. de la Garde, of a thing, that, at the same time, takes up all your attention: pray let me know when I *may* write to him upon this subject.

I return Mr. de Grignan many thanks, for his goodness to the Chevalier de Sévigné, when he saw him at Toulon. He is my god-son you know; I have had a Letter from him, wrote in all the transports of gratitude. If Mr. de Grignan should have an opportunity of speaking or writing in his favour, it would be doing me the most sensible pleasure. He is quite weary of being a lieutenant. I have been told he is a very brave lad, and very deserving of a ship. If you think Mr de Grignan is of the same opinion, you will do well to put him in mind of him.

Mr. de Coulanges is going soon to Lyons; he thinks to be back again before All-Saints, which will be just about the time of your coming hither. I would advise you to concert measures for coming together; he will steer your bark to your heart's content, and you will be infinitely pleased with such a companion.

I think the *little one* is very pretty, and you will be of infinite service to him, by amusing yourself, as you do, with his dawning reason; so tender an application to his improvement, cannot but turn out greatly to his advantage. Let me desire you to forgive him all his little faults, which he honestly confesses, but never overlook a falsity. When you read the *History of the Vizirs*, let me advise you not to stop at the *heads cut off* and lying on the table; do not quit the book at this passage, but continue till you come to the son *; and then, if you find a more truly honest man among all the race of Christians, blame me for having deceived you.

You are apprehensive you say, my dear child, that I am left-handed, and embarrassed with my limbs; not in the least: this little inconvenience affects only my-

* Achmet Cuproglie Pacha, was made grand Vizir upon the death of Mahomet Cuproglie his father. The lives of the father and son are very entertaining and interesting.

self, and is not perceptible to any one else. In a word, I am as like, as two drops of water, to your *bellissima*, excepting that I have a better shape than formerly; but you are, after all, too kind and engaging, to take such care of my health. Be under no uneasiness about Livri. I shall conduct myself here with great prudence, and shall return before the fogs come on.

I have a little tale to relate to you, which you may believe as firmly as if you had been an ear-witness to it. The King was saying, a few month's ago, "Indeed I am of opinion, that we shall not be able to relieve Pittsburgh; but, after all, I shall be no less King of France." Mr. de Montausier *, who would not say a thing he did not think for the Pope himself, replied. "It is certain, Sire, you would be no less King of France, though the enemy was to take from you Metz, Toul, Verdum, and the whole Franche Comté, together with a number of other provinces, which your ancestors did very well without." Upon this every one present were struck dumb. But the King replied with a very good grace, "I understand you perfectly well Mr. de Montausier; it is as much as to say, that you think my affairs are in a bad situation; but I, nevertheless, take in good part what you say, as I am convinced of your duty and affection to me." All this is strictly true, and I think that each of them maintained their respective characters admirably well.

The Baron (de Sévigné) is very well. The Chevalier de Nogent who is come express with the news of the taking of Aix, has mentioned him to the King as a person who has given proofs of his attachment to his service. Monsieur the Duke is very gay, he hunts, he goes to Chantilli and Liancourt; in a word, they are all glad to make hay while the sun shines. Mr. de Nevers is under no uneasiness about his wife, for her behaviour is quite unartful; he looks upon her as his daughter, and if she was to give herself the least airs of coquetry, he would be the first to perceive it and chide her for it; she is big with child, and very

* Preceptor to the King's children, and remarkable for speaking his mind the most openly of any person at court.

weak. My niece de Coligni * is brought to bed of a son; she says she shall take a great pride in bringing it up. So then Paulina is the Count's favourite, and sister Colette † thinks of nothing but a veil?

Adieu, my charming girl, I am always your's.

LETTER CCCLXVIII.

To the Same.

Paris, Friday, 7 August, 1676.

TO-morrow I go to Livry, my dear; there is a necessity I should, or, at least, I think so. But that shall in no wise prevent my writing to you as usual, nor shall our correspondence suffer the least interruption from it. I have seen some of the folks from court, and they are persuaded that Theobon's notion is ridiculous, and that Quanto's power was never more firmly established. She now finds herself superior to all opposition, and has no more apprehensions of the little sluts her nieces, than if they were a couple of cinder-wenches ‡. As she has a great share of understanding, she appears to be quite freed of the fear of having shut up the wolf in the sheepfold. She has beauty to an extreme; her dress equals her beauty, and her sprightliness is as pleasing as her dress.

The Chevalier de Noget || has again mentioned the Baron to the King, as having done things even beyond what his duty exacted of him, and the same he has said to a thousand others. Mr. de Louvois is returned, covered with praises, laurels, and applause. I fancy Vardes will bring you the grand-master, who is going to receive a small legacy of 400,000 crowns, lately left him §. Vardes will wait for him at Saint Esprit, and I have a notion will carry him with him to Grignan; and perhaps too, they may think of no such thing.

Mr. du Maine is a prodigy of wit; nothing is wanting in him, either tone of voice or cunning; he has a

* Louisa de Rabutin, Marchioness of Coligny.

† Mr. de Grignan's eldest daughter by his first wife.

‡ Madame de Nevres, and Mademoiselle de Thianges, afterwards Duchess of Sforza.

|| See the preceding Letter, page 57.

§ See the Letter, 31 July, page 54.

slap, every now and then, as well as the rest of the court, at Mr. de Montausier ; this occasioned my expression of *iniqua corte*. Seeing him one day pass by his window with a little wand in his hand, he called out to him, *What, Monsieur de Montausier, never without the staff of office?* only consider the tone and meaning with which these words were uttered, and you will scarce find many instances of this kind in a child of six years old. But he is every day saying a thousand such things. A few days ago he supped on the canal in a gondola, pretty near to that in which the King was : he has been told not to call him *papa* ; but having occasion to drink, the little wild rogue cries out, *Here's to the King my father's health*, and then fell into Madame de Maintenon's lap ready to kill himself with laughing. I don't know why I have singled out these two things to tell you, for assure you they are the most trifling of any he has said.

His Majesty has presented Monsieur le Grand's son with the late Bishop of Albi's fine abbey (of Chastilliers) valued at 25,000 livres per ann. My earnestness in your affairs has led me to speak in person to Mr. Puon about your pension, who told me that the Abbé de Grignan had it in his power to bring it about, so that I have nothing to do, but waken the handsome Abbé, and lo ! he breaks in upon my Letter, by assuring me that he will order matters so, that we shall have no occasion to fear having our pension. Write a line or two to him, and that will stir him up to perform wonders ; he will likewise settle the Marquis's patent in a proper manner. I have seen what was written to the handsome Abbé on the reconciliation of the father and son, nothing can be more diverting. The retreat in the midst of an arch-bishopric, and the Thebaid in the street St. Honore, gave me infinite pleasure. Retreats do not always succeed ; they should be carried into execution without talking of them ; but they have promised the Abbé to inform him of the subject of this curious reconciliation, with which I am greatly edified. Let me beg, my dear child, that I may hear it from you.

We wait in tremors for news from Germany ; it is expected that there has been a great battle there ; however,

ever, I shall go to Livri. Whosoever loves me, let him follow me. Corbinelli has promised to come and teach me to play, as I told you the other day. This has diverted me highly.

LETTER CCCLXIX.

To the Same.

Begun at Paris the 11th, and finished at Livri, Wednesday, 12 August, 1676.

OLD de Lorme, Bourdelot, and Veson, have forbid me to think of Vichi for this year; they think that it would not be prudent, to venture upon one dose of heat so close upon another; as to next year, it is another affair, we shall see how it will happen; but let d'Hacqueville say what he pleases, there is no daring to venture upon this journey, directly against the advice of those very physicians, who were so ready for sending me thither when they thought it necessary: I am not at all obstinate, but suffer myself to be ducked, with a docility to which I was a stranger before my illness. You will find me in a condition to give you pleasure: the little infirmity that remains about me, is so trifling, as to deserve neither your regard nor uneasiness.

D'Hacqueville is to have another interview with Mr. de Pomponne, in which he will discuss your affairs to the veteran, and will acquaint you with the result. I write this before I set out for Livri, where I propose being to-morrow morning, and where I shall finish this.

I wish you could only see the description you have given me of your *little one's* shape. I am glad it was so exaggerated by your apprehensions, for at length it will turn out that he is a very pretty little fellow, with a great deal of understanding; and this is the mighty affair that I was to call a consultation of matrons about. Nothing can surely be more diverting, than what you say about la S——— what an head! Can she have the confidence to shew herself when you are present? What the Grenoble ladies said is so droll, and so just, that I cannot for my life help thinking that you have said

said it for them. There is an imagination in it, that by no means seems to agree with the provincial manners.

The Archbisporic of Albi is given to Mr. de Mende *, but loaded with twelve thousand franks in pensions, *viz.* 3000 to the Chevalier de Nogent, 3000 to our friend Mr. d'Asen, and 6000 to Mr. de Nevers. I can see no reason for this latter, unless it is to increase his band of music that he keeps for his diversion every evening.

How happy am I, that you have finished *the Viseurs!* Tell me, do you not really love the last of them? It must be owned, that this book is not well written; but, nevertheless, the events are very well worth reading.

The Princess d'Harcourt † was delivered of a dead child six weeks ago, and was very near going off, but she is now better, and what will complete her cure is, that they have removed her to Clagny for fear of the noise of the town disturbing her. Madame de Montespan has taken the greatest care imaginable of her: God knows, whether she will shew a proper gratitude.

From Livri.

I Have just received your Letter of the second. You have been at St. Esprit, you see what it is to be very much tired: you might, however, have dropt me two lines, I would have taken it very kind in you. It would have been pleasant had you stumbled upon the Grand Master there: I know you are of opinion, I should have been still more diverted with the adventure than even you. I am in hopes I shall see Grenoble soon; I will speak to him about the affair of Venefan, it is a charming situation; I would not have it sold for a song, as estates generally are sold now in France. Poor de Tellier has purchased Barbesieux, one of the smallest estates in the kingdom, at sixteen years purchase. A thing perfectly ridiculous. Perhaps the

* Hyacinthus Serroni Bishop of Mende, and the first Archbishop of Albi, was a Dominican friar at the time that he followed Cardinal Mazarin out of Italy into France. Mazarin himself had been a monk, and general of the same order.

† Frances de Brancas, wife to Alphonso-Henry-Charles of Lorraine, Prince of Harcourt.

Prince of Conti, or his council, would not chuse to purchase in this manner, as you do not sell Venesan by a decree. As for Caderousse, I can see no hopes of making up matters with him, but by playing his game at primo for him with Mr. de Grignan. I beg you would use no manner of ceremony in sending me the bride's commissions : I shall be infinitely pleased you would consider me as one wholly devoted to your service, and shall be in raptures to take a trip to Paris on so good an errand. The good d'Escars will treat us with a dish of her dexterity, and with a most hearty welcome. You have only to employ us, you will have reason to be satisfied with our services. I am informed from Paris, that there are no news from Germany as yet. The public uneasiness, on account of the approaching engagement, which is thought to be unavoidable, is much like a violent fit of the cholic, which has lasted now almost a fortnight. Mr. de Luxembourg kills us with couriers, whereas poor Mr. de Turenne scarce ever sent any. And after gaining a victory, informed us at his leisure, by common course of the post. Our Flemish canons are in perfect health ; as is our good hermit, who writes me of the seventeenth from Lyons, where he has arrived in five days from his hermitage. He waits the arrival of his colleagues ; had it been left to him to fix the route, he tells me he had reached Rome on the twelfth day from Lyons.

Mr. de Hacqueville has had abundance of altercation with Mr. de Pomponne, and nothing further can be done in the affair of your marquisate, but to dispose of it with that title, which is sure to render an estate the more valuable ; so that if the purchaser is of the rank required, it is an easy matter for him to obtain Letters in chancery, creating him Marquis of Hacqueville.

The Abbe de Chevigni is no longer our Bishop of Rennes, he prefers the expectation of the Bishopric of Poictiers ; it is the Bishop of Dol who comes to Rennes, and the Abbé de Beaumanoir to Dol. You would have me, my dear, to speak of the state of my health, it is still better here than at Paris, that same little asthma disappeared at first view of the horizon of our little terrace ; there have been no evening damps.

as yet ; on perceiving the least cold, I retire to my apartment. They have made a window in the little study, which opens into the garden, and which perfectly removes the moist and unwholsome air that it formerly had : but besides the extreme agreeableness this improvement gives it, it is not in the least hot ; for it has the sun upon it, only an hour or two at his first rising. I read with the father Prior, and am now engaged in the Memoirs of one Mr. de Ponti, a gentleman of Provence, who died at Port-Royal about six years ago, upwards of fourscore. He gives an account of his life, and of the reign of Lewis XIII *, with so much truth, simplicity, and good sense, that I can scarce prevail upon myself to lay him aside. The Prince has read him from beginning to end with the same eagerness. This book has a world of admirers ; there are some however who can't endure it ; and indeed one must either love or hate him extremely, there is no such thing as observing any kind of mean in this affair : I would not however swear you would like him.

The reason why you do not think you shall be able to prevail with me to go to Vichi, which is that I may see you and bring you back, is that, of all others, which would naturally determine me to it, and the only one in the world that seems worthy my attention. I should therefore set out without the least hesitation, were I persuaded this were at all necessary ; but I think my bills accepted with two much honour, to be in any doubt of their being punctually paid. I shall therefore await you, my beauty, with all the joy you can possibly imagine, from an affection like that I have for you.

* Lewis de Ponti, a gentleman of Provence, who after having spent fifty-six years in the army in the service of three of our Kings, thought it time to retire in 1653, and to hide himself from the world at Port-Royal des Champs, where he led a life of piety and penitence, and died 24 June, 1670. Vid. the Recr. of P. R. page 236. As Thomas de Fosse was the person who digested the Memoirs in question, this work was judged to belong to Port-Royal ; and it is owing to this, that it was not equally well received by every one.

LETTER CCCLXX.

To the Same.

Livri, Friday, 14 August, 1676.

MY dear child, I am in perfect health at this place : I am more sensible of the greatness of my late disorder, from the fear I feel of a relapse, and by my precautions with regard to the evening damps, than by any thing else ; for you very well remember what a supreme degree of pleasure I used to receive from fine evenings, and from moon-light. I thank you for thinking of me in that enchanting season. Mesdames de Villars, de Saint-Gelais, d'Heudicourt, Mademoiselle l'Estranges, the *little dear*, and the little Ambassador, came here yesterday at noon ; the weather was charming. A slight suspicion of their intention, occasioned an equal degree of providence on my part, which furnished out an excellent dinner. I have got an exceeding good cook, you shall give me your opinion of his performance. They tell me there are as yet no news from Germany. It is dying by inches to feel, in this manner, a violent inquietude for ten or twelve days running and the Marquis de la Trousse, who returns from la Trousse, will discover her game all at once, and will discover it such as it shall really be, good or bad ; for it will assuredly turn out just what it is, and all our uneasiness, just like two equal players, makes no odds at all. I am, however, of opinion, that the warmest friendships will by no means spare themselves, what say you to it ? The King has given one Plessis, grand vicar of Notre-Dame, and a very worthy person, the Bishopric of Saintes : his Majesty said publickly, “ I have “ this morning given away a Bishopric to one whom I “ never saw.” This is the second. The other was the Abbé de Barillon, the Bishop of Luçon. The *pretty lady** begins to be somewhat weary of the public exhibition ; she has been, for two or three days together, unable to put on her cloaths. The King plays still, but not quite so long at a time. If this change of the

* See the Letter of 29 July.

Scene does not last long, it must be because it is too pleasing to be of long continuance. They affect much to have no private hours ; every body is of opinion that good policy requires, that there should be none, and that were it still the fashion, it should certainly be discontinued. Madame de Villars is going to Savoy in good earnest, to play a very pretty part ; she has a most magnificent coach, lined with crimson velvet, a fine house, and all that. One of her amusements, she says, will be, that she will fall in love with nobody in that country ; a melancholy sort of amusement truly. That of la Heudicourt, who goes with her for some weeks, is not a whit more gay. The manner of that country, which you know well enough, is to overwhelm one with embraces enough almost to turn one's brain, and presently after not to know one ; but, above all, to take every thing with an air of the greatest indifference imaginable.

This unconcernedness well deserves to be repaid in kind by poor mortals, but there is bird-lime in their very looks. Farewel, pretty charmer, I do not now prate at the rate I used to do at Paris ; I am sorry for it, on your account, since you divert yourself with the draughts I make.

LETTER CCCLXXI.

To the same.

Livri, Wednesday, 19 August, 1676.

I Must chide you, my child, for bathing yourself in that puny river, which, by the bye, is no river, and which only assumes that pompous name, as some folks do that of great families : they, however, deceive nobody, all the world knows well enough, how the matter is ; and here comes one Mr. le Laboureux, who has laid open its source, and shewn me, that its true name is that of *the Fountain* ; but neither that of *Vaucluse*, or *Arethusa*, nor of *Health* ; but a tiny fountain without a name, so far is it from any pretensions to fame ; this is the noble stream in which you have been bathing. I am almost dead with fear, least you should have caught the rheumatism by this bold step, or at least

least a great cough ; nor shall I be cured of my apprehension, till I hear how you do. My God ! had I done so, what a life you would have led me.

Besides, you already know that the German mountain is brought to-bed of a mouse at last, without pain, or so much as a groan. One of our friends, whom you love in proportion to his care of me, tells me he is perfectly at a loss how to keep you and me within bounds on this occasion ; that they have discovered in the map a devilish sort of unknown wood, which hemmed us in so as to render it impossible for us to draw up in order of battle, except in the face of the enemy ; for which reason, we have been obliged to retreat on the 10th, and to abandon Philipsburg to the brutality of the Germans. Mr. de Turenne had never discovered this wood, so that we find every day less reason to lament the loss of him. We are, moreover, in fear for Maestricht, because the army of our brother's is in no condition to succour it. It would be a fresh disappointment, were the Swedes to be driven out of Pomerania. The Chevallier de Grignan informs me the Baron has played the fool at Aix ; could you think it, he placed himself in the trenches, and on the very counterscarp, with as much indifference, and every whit as unconcerned, as if he had been at home by his own fire-side. He had taken it into his head, that he must needs have the regiment of Rambures, though it was that very instant given away to the Marquis de Feuquieres ; in this conceit, he exposed himself as if he had been a common sentinel.

As to the notion of a formal reconciliation with Madame de Heudicourt, it is but so much lost labour. We must leave it to time to wear out things that ought to be forgotten, the time will come when we shall see her again ; her ease, her affability, and her good breeding, have gained her esteem ; she is formed for this pretty kind of trifling ; she is incapable of affording any thing new to the imagination ; and if she is indifferent about us, we know how to do without her : one advantage, however, she certainly has beyond all others, in having accustomed us to expect such behaviour from her.

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MARCHIONESS DE SEVIGNE. 71

The Archbishop (of Arles) writes us astonishing things of your care of him, and of the complaisance you have for him. I can never sufficiently praise you for your conduct in this particular, which is at once so genteel, and so well behaved. There are certain duties of civility, which I hold absolutely indispensable; in the present case, nothing could possibly alleviate a piece of ingratitude, which would be at the same time so heinous a trespass against good breeding. It is to this good and venerable patriarch you owe that order and regularity that is seen in the affairs of your house, and be assured that the loss of him would be to you utterly irreparable.

They who have betted that our worthy Cardinal goes to Rome, have certainly won. He reached Lyons two days before the rest of the company; this I take for granted, as you do, because I know it to be true, and it is undoubted matter of fact, only it will be a difficult matter to make the rest of the world believe it. I say the same with respect to the marriage of Mr. de la Garde. It is really pleasant enough to hear the Marquis d'Huxelles * speak coolly of it, as of the concerns of a lover who has deceived her, and served her a very dirty trick.

I commend you exceedingly for returning to your old way of bathing in your chamber. Should you observe any of the subjects of my Letters improperly placed, I must inform you it is owing to this; that as I receive some of your Letters on the Saturday, I cannot be easy till I have writ an answer to it; on Wednesday morning I receive another pacquet, so that I frequently resume the topics I had mentioned in my answers to the proceeding: and this is the reason of this seeming whim. It is now upwards of a fortnight since I answered your Letter in relation to d'Albi. Mr. de Mende has caused him to be loaded with pensions.

I am told the fine lady has been seen again in her fine apartment, in the usual manner; and that the secret of

* Marie de Bailleul, mother of the late Marshal d'Huxelles, had been the mistress of Mr. de la Garde, with whom she kept a constant correspondence by Letters during several years, which turned wholly on the news at court, and those of the town.

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her uneasiness was a slight fit of anxiety about her dear, and Madame de S——. If there is any thing in this, we shall soon see the latter wither in her bloom; there is no such thing as forgiveness, not even for the bare misfortune of pleasing.

As to the affair of health, I am perfectly well; my complaints have entirely left me, and I think the rheumatism has now taken its final leave of me. I no longer expose myself to the evening damps, and either employ my time at home, or take an airing on the heights in my chariot. The moon-light it must be allowed is a prodigious temptation; but I have hitherto withstood its allurements. In short, you may make yourself perfectly easy both in regard to my hands and knees. I shall have recourse to my ointment, and will take some of the honest fellow's powder, as soon as the dog-days are over. It is true, I leave it entirely to you to tutor me in what manner you think fit, and do really believe you will do me more good than five hundred doctors.

Mr. Charier tells me, that Cardinal de Retz set out two days before his colleagues. I am no more spoke to on this topic; I am too well known, and have had the honour done me to be treated like one of the d'Haquelles; but I can unriddle, for all that, what they would say to me, if they durst. I am sorry your Cardinal* does not go the same road with the rest. I, for my part cannot get it out of my head, that ours will either do something very extraordinary, and such as perhaps people little imagine; or else, that he will resign his hat on this occasion, or that he will use a very uncommon strain, or that he will be made Pope; this last is attended with some difficulty: in a word, I am of opinion something will happen out of the common road. He has writ me two lines from Lyons. There is good reason to be uneasy about his health; and it is a thousand to one, but the heats, the journey, or the conclave, do him some mischief.

I was yesterday in the evening in the avenue which leads to this place, when I saw a coach and six advancing towards us, and who should this be but the good

* Jerome Grimaldi, Archbishop of Aix.

lady Marshal d'Estrées, the Prebend, the lady Marquis de Semeterre whom the Abbé de la Victoire calls the Mite, and the fat Abbé de Pontcarré. We had a deal of chat, walked, supped, and at last my company set out by the light of my old friend the moon. Madame de la Coulanges uses the bath; Corbinelli is ill of sore eyes; and Madame de la Fayette has given over taking the air in her coach. But for my own part, I employ myself in receiving and answering your Letters; I read, walk abroad, and feed my fancy with the hopes of seeing you; you see I am no object of compassion, therefore I advise you not to be rash in being sorry for me. The Abbé de la Vergne seems exceeding zealous about your conversion: though I am far from considering it as a thing likely to happen soon, at least it is like that of Madame de Schomberg. Her great merit, it must be acknowledged, is grown somewhat more humane, and she has always had abundance for those of her acquaintance; this light, so long hid under a bushel, now enlightens all the world; she is not the only person on whose change fortune has begotten this miracle. We are now plaguing honest d'Aubilly, for being more zealous to save a soul lodged in a fair body, than any other. I say the same of the Abbé de la Vergné, whose merit and reputation are greatly spread abroad in these parts; I think you exceeding happy in him. Does he leave Provence? and is he to return to it any more? Nothing can be pleasanter than your vision of the turtle of the grove. Who taught her mate the way to gain her heart. She purchased the bed which belonged to the deceased, for reasons that you will not be at a loss to guess.

The friend * of Madame de Coulanges is still in favour. If our little friend † is really fond of that good country, it must be owing to that transitory pleasure she receives in it; it is impossible she should be weak enough to be the dupe of that shew of friendship and tenderness they take so much pains to affect. I know nothing of Madame de Monaco. Everything at the Hotel de Grammont is hid under the impenetrable discretion of d'Hacqueville; and, for all that, every

* Madame Maintenon.

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† Madame de Coulanges.

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thing is exactly on the same footing as it was at the Hotel de Grancei, except the meagreness and languor of the Prince, which smells so strong of the Brinvilliers. The Abbé de Grignan will inform you of what relates to Penautier; I lose a thousand pieces of intelligence by being here. Mr. de Coulanges set out for Lyons with Madame de Villars. I think when he is once got there, he ought to be under your government. You may at least be perfectly easy with regard to his management; you could not possibly have had a handsomer conductor. The good Abbé has the most perfect regard and friendship for you; he frequently drinks your health, and especially when the wine happens to be good, expatiates greatly in your praise, and tells me I do not love you enough. Farewel, my dear, I am in no apprehension of such a censure in the eye of the Almighty.

My preceptors in philosophy \ddagger have been somewhat neglectful of me. La Mousse is gone to Poictou with Madame de Sancei \S . The father Prior (of Livri) would be glad to learn it too, it is a pity so fine a disposition should be lost for want of cultivation. We are engaged in a melancholy business enough; we are reading the little treatise of the Passions, and we are now sensible that the retreat of Mr. de Luxemburg must necessarily follow from the construction of the nerves of his back: but do you know that all of a sudden they have left off speaking of Germany at Versailles? One fine morning, as some well meaning people were asking what news from Germany, out of mere concern for their country, they were answered: what put it into their heads to ask about news from Germany? there are no couriers come from Germany, there are none to come, and nobody looks for any; why the deuce then ask for news from Germany?

\ddagger Mess^r. de la Mousse and Corbinelli.

\S She was sister to Mr. de Coulanges.

LETTER CCCLXXII.

To the Same.

Paris, Friday, 21 August, 1676.

I Am come hither this morning to execute the commissions of Mr. de la Garde. I alighted at the house of the good d'Escar, whom I found in a bilious fever, but replete with the kindest and most hearty good-will imaginable. She had with her Madame la Maine. I dined with Mr. de Mèmes, and at three returned to Madame d'Escar's; I met, on entering the court, Madame de Vins and d'Hacqueville, who came very politely to see me. We took off an exceeding fine manteau, a vast pretty petticoat, some gold and silver stuff, enough for a toilet, lace for the petticoat and for the toilet, with a world of other articles, all of which will be incomparably beautiful: but as I have ordered them all in my own name, and on very short credit, let me beg of you not to leave me exposed to the uncertainty of the payment of Mr. de la Garde's pensions, but send me a bill of exchange. Mr. Colbert is a little indisposed; were you to know the use that is made of this pretext, even with regard to your pension, you would easily be convinced, that nothing is equal to a bill of exchange; as for the poor courtiers, who are accustomed to patience, they will wait the happy moment at the royal treasury. The handsome Abbé * is this moment coming in; he came to see me on Wednesday at Livri, we had a deal of talk about your affairs. What is certain is, that the coadjutor ought never to be proposed †, but as a most proper and worthy person, without its even coming to light that he has ever bestirred himself in the least about it, since he ought to appear to the world as fixed, and as satisfied in every respect, with his present condition. One would only endeavour to make sure of the Archbishop (of Arles); that is, to dispose him to re-

* Mr. l'Abbé de Grignan, brother to the coadjutor of Arles.

† The business in question was the Archishoprick of Albi, which was thought to be still vacant, by the refusal which Mr. de Mende was reported to have made of it.

ceive such other person, for coadjutor, as should be proposed to him: and even this must be transacted merely by the confessor, it not being within Mr. de Pomponne's district, who, however, would certainly not fail to support it, if occasion offered. But it is believed here, that notwithstanding the report that has been current of Mr. de Mende's refusal of Albi, that he will yet accept of it; if this is true, all our conferences are in vain. As for the government, the son is to have the reversion of it, and *Madame te Lutre* will be well enough satisfied with this acknowledgment, on her quitting the dress * she has worn so considerable a while. We are also told that Theobon, whether from a sense of her merit, or whatever her pretensions may be, would be extremely content to have it: so you see on what this affair turns. I love the handsome Abbé for his great care of your affairs, and for his frequently calling on me to talk with me about them, who by the bye am far from being the dupe in this respect, I suppose from the interest I take in them, which I am in all other earthly affairs. We passed the evening most agreeably at Livri; and have this day come to a determination with the mighty d'Hacqueville, that all our solicitations are in vain for this time, but that we ought, for all that, not to lose so fair an occasion of presenting our request. Madame de Vins entreats me to put off my return for to-morrow, and to be at Madame de Villars's between five and six, where she will also be. We may possibly see Mr. de Pomponne in the evening, who will return from Pomponne, where Madame de Vins has not been, on account of a law-suit; for she is never without one, and which is always to be determined to-morrow. I must own I feel myself strongly tempted by her proposal, so that I have all the appearance imaginable of putting off my departure till Sunday, when I propose to hear mass at Livri. It is whispered about, that *Quanto* is upon a new scent; no one can tell where about: they have named the lady whom I named to you; but as the gentry of that country are esteemed deep politicians, it is possibly not there, neither. One thing, however,

* She was Canoness of Poussai.

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is past all doubt ; the cavalier seems gay, cheerful, and quite himself, whilst the damsel appears sad, confused, and sometimes dissolved in tears. I will tell you more of this anon, if I am able.

Madam Maintenon is gone to Maintenon for three weeks. The King has sent her le Notre to embellish that beautifully ugly place. I have as yet seen nothing of the handsome Coulanges, nor of Corbinelli. The army of Marshal Schomberg goes to succour Maestricht ; though every body thinks the enemy will not wait his coming, either because the place is already taken, or that the siege has been raised ; they are it seems not strong enough. Farewel, my dear, and amiable creature, farewell.

LETTER CCCLXXIII.

To the Same.

Livri, Wednesday, 26 August, 1676.

I fancy you discover that I answered both your Letters on Wednesday ; as for the Fridays, I live at the public charge, or at least on my own stock ; that is I make shift to write, now and then, a very sorry epistle. I am now waiting the receipt of your last written Letter, and yet I am going to try at an answer, as well as to inform you of my proceedings for several days last past. I wrote you on Friday, the Abbé de Grignan being then at my elbow ; I then told you that Madame de Vins and d'Hacqueville had entreated me to go with them the next day to Madame de Villars's, where they said she should be. We spent two hours there extremely agreeable ; I staid therefore purely out of my great love and regard for them. I had, before that, been at Madame de la Fayette's, for I must clear my conscience. La Saint Geran shewed us a very pretty Letter, which you and Mr. de Grignan had written, we admired greatly the wisdom of your housewifry. After that I went to Mademoiselle de Meri's, and Sunday morning returned to this place, after having paid my respects, on the two evenings, to Madame de Coulanges, and Corbinelli. The former uses the bath ; she tells me she intends to come down

soon, the time we shall leave entirely to her own discretion. You know the pleasure I take in executing your commands, and that I never value myself upon any trifling services I do : I am even charmed with being in a state of insignificance, a pleasure one is sure to enjoy, if they live to grow somewhat advanced in years. Corbinelli is willing to come down, provided I desire or want he should ; and I am resolved I never will desire him. In the mean while, the worthy Marchioness d'Huxelles, whom I have loved so many years, desired I would not fail to take share of a dinner she was to give Mr. de la Rouchefoucault, Mr. and Madame de Coulanges, Madame de la Fayette, &c. I thought I discovered, in her air and voice, what was sufficient to determine me to undergo the fatigue of it. This entertainment happened to be on the Monday, so that though I came back on Sunday, I returned Monday morning to the Marquis's from this place. She gave this dinner at her neighbour Longueil's. The house is really very pretty ; nothing could exceed the order and regularity of the servants ; so that this change gave infinite satisfaction. When the company came, I had been there some time scolding and railing at their stay. Instead of Mr. and Madame de Coulanges, who could not be there, we had Briole, the Abbé de Quince, and Mademoiselle de la Rouchefoucault. The repast, the conversation, every thing deserved the highest encomiums : we broke up late. I returned to Madam d'Escars's, that I might a second time admire the beauty of the lace and stuffs ; every thing will be wonderfully well. From thence I went to Madame de Coulanges's ; and was scolded at, for so much as thinking of returning. They would keep me with them, they could not tell why, and I returned on Thursday morning, which was yesterday, and had taken a turn in the garden, before the folks at Paris had the least thought about me.

The troubles in Germany have shifted the scene and passed into Flanders. The army of Marshal Schomberg is in march, and will be, on the twenty-ninth, in a condition to relieve Maestricht. But what afflicts us as good Frenchwomen, and which, at the same time,

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consoles us as being interested in the affair, is that it is generally believed, that they will come too late, let them use what diligence they will. Calvo has not men sufficient to relieve the guard : the enemy will make a last effort, and the more so, as it is believed, beyond all doubt, that Villa Hermosa * has entered the lines, and is to join the Prince of Orange, in order to give a general assault: these are the prospects I found at Paris, and of which I have told you as much as it was possible for me to do, that I might compose myself for taking de l'Orme's powders, as we are now got out of these dog days, which it seems have made no demands as usual; can this be what they call the dog days? Those little queens of Paris say, that Marphorio asks Pasquin how it comes about that Philipsburg and Maestrich should both be taken in one year, and that Pasquin answers, that it is because Mr. de Turenne is at St. Denis, and the Prince of Conde at Chantilli.

Corbinelli will answer your questions, with regard to the bigness of the moon, and the causes of the sensations of bitter and sweet. He has convinced me as to the dimensions of the moon; but as for the sensations of the palate, I own I am not quite so clear. He says, whatsoever seems not sweet to us is bitter; I know there is no such thing as sweet or bitter; but I make use of the expression, by which we call things abusively or improperly bitter, that I may make myself understood by the ignorant and the vulgar. He has promised me he will open my eyes, with respect to this affair, when he comes. Nothing can be pleasanter, than what you tell him to prevent my going abroad during the damps of the evening: I do assure you, daughter, I never do go abroad in them; the very thought of contributing to your satisfaction, were sufficient to work this miracle; besides, I have a mortal apprehension of relapsing again into my rheumatism. I resist the charms of that seducing enchantress the moon, with a constancy and firmness worthy the highest panegyric: after such an effort as this, who will pretend to doubt of my virtue, or to speak with

* Governor of the Spanish Netherlands, and General of the forces of that Crown.

more propriety, of my fearfulness. I have been to see Madame de Schomberg; she loves and honours you as it were beforehand, so that you will find the ice already broken. The Abbé de la Vergne writes her letters much to your advantage, and she has spoke to me in the same favourable manner of him; there is not a person in this world for whom she has so great a regard; in short, he is her father, her chief, and most trusty friend; she says a world of good of him, and its a chapter without end, when once she gets upon it. She sees well enough he honours you, and is desirous of acquiring your esteem; he has a most exquisite taste: she is sure you must like his ease and sweetness of temper, and that he has an undoubted right to make a convert of you, since you are persuaded that what he proposes is for your good. Had she been equally persuaded of the expediency of what he intended for herself, the business had been as good as done. You see, by our talk, we don't reckon much on what comes from above. I desire you would talk to me of that Abbé, and let me know how long you have had him with you.

It is imagined *Quanto* is wholly reinstated in his felicity: it is owing to the want of subject of discourse in others, that we are told of so many revolutions. Madame de Maintenon continues still at Maintenon with Barillon and the *Tourte**; she has entreated others to come there likewise: but the person, who you said had a mind, some time ago, to set your mind upon the trot, and who is a deserter from that court, has answered with abundance of pleasantry, that at present there was no lodging-room for their friends, that what there was, was only fit for their lacqueys. You see what an accusation was brought against this head-piece; whom can one trust after this? The favour in which she is, it must be allowed, is extreme, and it is certain that *Quanto* speaks of her as of the principal, or at least as the second best friend he has in the world. He has sent her a famous person †, who is to make her house admirably fine. It is now said the

* See the Letter 21 August, page 75.
name for a lady about the court.

† A fictitious

Prince goes there too ; I suppose this was determined yesterday at Madame Montespan's : they are to make this journey by relays, and without sleeping there at all. I return you a thousand thanks for your excellent account of a reconciliation, in which I take so great an interest, and which I desired exceedingly, both for the satisfaction of the father, and to say the truth, for the honour of the son, that I might be at freedom to esteem him in the most hearty manner. The prospects you give me, in order to remove the horrors of a separation, are most charming indeed ; nothing can have happier consequences with respect to my health, than the hopes you give me. The best beginning will be to come away ; you will find me quite a different creature from what you think me ; my poor knees, and those hands which give you so much apprehension, will certainly be perfectly sound by that time. In a word, my present delicacy would be esteemed downright rusticity in any other, so superabundantly was I provided with that noble qualification.

As for Vichi, I make not the least doubt of returning thither this summer. Veson told me to-day, he wished it were this instant ; but de Lorme tells me, I ought to be exceeding careful how I venture on such a step at this season : Bourdelot says flatly, its certain death, and that I forget my rheumatism took its rise from excessive heat. I love to consult these grave folks, merely that I may have the pleasure of laughing at them ; can any thing be more diverting than this contrariety of opinions ? The Jesuits were certainly in the right in advancing, that there were grave authors who maintained every probable opinion : you see then I am at liberty to follow that I like best. My handsome physician of Challes is now with me ; I do assure you he knows full as much, perhaps more than any of them. I know you are going to rail at this approbation ; but were you to know how well I have been taken care of by him for these two or thee days, and to what a prosperous and hopeful state he has brought a disorder I thought I had entirely got rid of, and which I got at Paris, you would not chuse but love him exceedingly. In a word, I am perfectly recovered

from it, and am under no necessity at all of being let blood ; I keep close to his prescriptions, and will afterwards take some of my old good man's powders. I think, from my present habit of body, I shall not be able in three years time, to get quit of these returns. They wanted to have kept me at Paris ; had I not walked a great deal, I had not been so well as I am. I conjure you, daughter, to make yourself perfectly easy upon my account, and to think now at least of affording me something real, after feeding me so long with flattering hopes only.

I have received a billet from our Cardinal from Lyons, and afterwards one from Turin. He tells me his health is much better than he could have hoped for, after so great a fatigue. He seems so much pleased with Mr. de Villars, that he is gone to receive him in his villa. You know they are not to see the Duke (of Savoy) as they are to treat him on a footing with the other Italian Princes, to whom they never give the hand ; and that Duke is determined to behave exactly in the same manner with the Prince ; that is to say, every one is to do the honours after the manner of his own country. Do not you really admire the rank and quality of those éminences ? I am astonished ours has not wrote you from Lyons, a thing so extremely natural to have done. I would have you consider seriously about doing something with regard to the growth of your son, this is alone sufficient to prevail with you to have a consultation ; as for the rest, things go perfectly to our wishes with the coadjutor : but if there is a place in the universe proper to recover him after his fatigue, it is certain in this country. As for that German, I am well informed the Abbé de Grignan has no thoughts of equipping him till your return ; this would not be worth the trouble it would cost, after waiting so very long. What has happened to you is really a little miracle ; your embarrassment made us smile, to think you could not find out whether he is master of the delicacies of the German language, or whether you confound the Swiss with the other. We think you will never be able to attain this nicety : you will undoubtedly confound the one with the other,

and

and will think the *Poppet* talks like a Swiss instead of speaking the German. You speak so divertingly about Flanders and Germany, that with respect to the tranquillity of the one and the confusion that prevails in the other, all we are able to say, is, let each take its turn. Farewel, my lovely and dear daughter, I admire your pretty excuses about your saying so much of your child; I must ask your pardon, with the same reason, for talking to you so much about mine. The Baron writes me, that he thinks they will never be able to reach the end of their journey soon enough, let them make what dispatch they will; I pray God what he says may prove true; I must ask my country's pardon for saying so. You tell me nothing of the said *deponent**; it is an infallible proof he has nothing else to say; will he never pronounce that long wished for yes: it is an extreine pretty word. I beseech him to love me ever.

LETTER CCCLXXIV.

To the same.

Livri, Friday, 28 August, 1676.

I Beg my dear country's pardon for it, but I wish from my soul Mr. de Schomberg may never be able to come to an action; his cool blood, and his manner so different from that of Mr. de Luxemburg, make me apprehensive of consequences as different every whit. I have been this moment writing Madame de Schomberg a billet, to know what news there is from him. This is a lady whose high and transcendent merit I discovered a great while ago; though I find myself just where I was, since she has become a general's lady. She is fond of Corbini to distraction; never will her sensible head be in the least tinctured with any sort of knowledge, so that the novelty she finds in this conversation, will not be at all singular; he will have still as much reason to admire the oddity of her's. They say Madam de Coulanges will come down here to-morrow with him: I shall be heartily glad of it, since it is to their exquisite taste I shall owe this visit. I

* Mr. de la Garde.

have

have writ d'Hacqueville to be informed of what I want to know with regard to Mr. de Pomponne, and also a fresh solicitation, I believe it may be the twentieth request I have made that little flatterer de Parère. I am assured he will give you just the answer he is to write me, which is, that Mr. de Mende has accepted of the Bishopric of Albi, notwithstanding the reports that have prevailed to the contrary. I am, moreover, reading the emblems of the holy Scriptures *, which begin from the history of Adam. I have begun with the creation you are so fond of, and will end with the death of our Saviour, which you know is an admirable series. Here we find every transaction, though related in a concise manner; the style is very fine; it is done by an eminent hand: it is all along interspersed with excellent reflections taken out of the Fathers, and is very engaging reading. For my own part, I go much further than the Jesuits; and when I see these reproaches of ingratitude, and those dreadful punishments with which God afflicts his people, I cannot help concluding, that we, who are freed from that yoke to which they were subjected, are of consequence highly culpable, and justly deserve those scourges of fire and water, which the Almighty employs when he sees cause. The Jesuits do not say enough on this head, and as for others, they give cause to murmur against the justice of the Deity, in weakening the supports of our liberty so much as they do. You see what fruit I derive from my reading. I fancy my confessor will enjoin me to read the philosophy of Descartes.

I imagine Madame de Rochebonne is now with you, and I present my respects to her. Is she glad to find herself in the house of her forefathers? Do they at the chapter † pay their respects to her in the manner they ought? Is she delighted with the sight of her nephews? And is it true that *Paulina* ‡ goes by the name of

* History of the Old and New Testament, by Mr. de Sacy, Sieur de Royaumont. † The collegiate chapter of Grignan.

‡ Paulina Adhemar de Monteil de Grignan, grand-daughter of Madame de Sévigné, was then three years old. She married in 1694 Louis de Semiane, Marquis d'Esparron, the King's Lieutenant-general in Provence, after the death of Mr. de Grignan his father-in-law.

Madame

Madame de Mazarques? I should be angry with myself in being wanting in the respect due to her condition. And prithee, is the little one, eight months old, likely to live a century? I am so frequently at Grignan, that I sometimes fancy you must see me amongst you. Oh! how charming would it be, could one transport oneself, in an instant, to the places where we are present in our imagination. Here comes my pretty physician *, who finds me in extreme good health, and vain of having observed his orders for two or three days.

LETTER CCCLXXV.

To the Same:

Livri, Wednesday, 2 September, 1676.

M R. d'Hacqueville and Madam de Vins slept here; they came, like good creatures as they were, to see us yesterday; it is a most agreeable company; you know with what harmony we pass the time together. Brancas is come too, to dream awhile with his Sylphide †. We had a deal of talk however, he and I, about you; we admired your conduct, and the honour you have done him ‡. But what we all admired was the vast happiness of the King, who, notwithstanding the ineffectual, but too necessary measures Mr. de Schomberg was obliged to follow in his march for the relief of Maestricht, is informed that the mere approach of his troops has raised the siege. The enemy did not dare to risk an engagement: the Prince of Orange, who was sorry to abandon an enterprize that had given him so much trouble, was for venturing all; but Villa Hermosa thought he ought not to hazard his troops, so that they have not only raised the siege, but even abandoned their powder and their cannon; and, in a word, with every mark of a precipitate retreat. It is the most fortunate thing in the world to have to do with confederate forces, for one reaps every sort of advantage from it; but the surest way is, to wish for

* Amonio.

† Madam de Coulanges.

‡ The Count de Brancas had made the match between Mademoiselle de Sévigné and Mr. de Grignan.

whatever

whatever the King wishes for ; and then we are sure to have them fulfilled. I was in the most extreme uneasiness, I had sent to Madame de Schomberg's, to Madame de St. Geran's, to d'Hacqueville's, when I was informed of all these miracles. The King was not free from uneasiness about it, any more than us. Mr. de Louvois made the utmost haste to acquaint his Majesty with the news of this good fortune; the Abbé de Calvo was with him; the King embraced him in the transports of joy, and gave him an abbey worth twelve hundred livies a year, a pension of twenty thousand livres, with the government of Aix to his brother, with a world of praises, more to be valued than all the rest. In this manner has the mighty siege of Maestricht been raised, and Pasquin proves a mere blockhead.

Young Nangis is going to marry little Rochefort, a very dismal match. Mylady Marshal has been till now in the greatest affliction, in an extreme bad state of health, and prodigiously altered; she has eat no meat since the death of her husband; I shall try to persuade her to continue this abstinence. I have much discourse with the good d'Hacqueville and Madam de Vins, who seems to have the greatest friendship for you imaginable; this you will say is no news, but it is always agreeable to learn that distance makes no alteration in the minds of our friends. We anticipate the pleasure of seeing you next month: for, in effect, it is now the month of September, and we know the next to that is October. I have taken some of my good man's powder; this grand remedy, which frightens all the world, is a bagatelle to me, and really works miracles on me. I had my handsome physician with me, which was no small comfort; he never once opened his mouth but in Italian; he told me a thousand diverting stories during the operation. It is he who advised my dipping my hands in the wine butts in the vintage; after that to use the breast of an ox; and lastly, if there be occasion for it, the marrow of a deer, with some Hungary-water. In short, I am determined not to wait till the return of the winter; I am resolved to be cured, and well before the fine season is intirely past. You see I am very careful of

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my health, and as I consider it as a thing belonging to you, I do not see how I can do otherwise.

Madame de Coulanges continues.

Be ingenuous, Madam, and tell me whether you do not allow me to have just cause of complaint against you? I wrote you formerly from Lyons, never from Paris, and now write you from Livri; what shews I am in the right, is that you take all in wondrous good part: had you done me the favour to have taken notice of it, I should have been rejoiced at it, as I had then seemed of some consequence to the world; but it is beneath you to find fault with such a poor mortal as me. We lead here a very quiet harmless kind of life: I desire you would exhort Madame de Sévigné strongly to take care of her health, you know she does not refuse doing what you desire her; she never goes abroad during the evening damps; her only comfort is, the hopes of seeing you here again: as for my own part, I really desire it with an eagerness to which you have no pretensions. You are so well informed already with respect to news, that I shall not take up your and my precious time, with giving you any. The King is so very happy, that I cannot see how it is possible he should form so much as a wish to be more so. Farewel, Madam, you are expected with that extreme impatience you deserve, a thing I may say without even the suspicion of exaggerating. Barillon finds no company that deserves his notice, when you are in Provence, except the Abbé de la Trappe. But you will do well to lend an attentive ear to Mr. de Brancas, he is going to hold forth to you.

Mr. de Brancas.

It is impossible for me to be at Livri, without thinking of Mademoiselle de Sévigné, or without reflecting, that if I have laboured to make Mr. de Grignan happy*, it has been to my own cost, since I suffer as much as man can do, from your long absence. Madame de Coulanges would fain give us to understand, that there are some folks in the world who have reason to regret

* See the note, page 19.

it still more: I have no desire to enter into a detail of her arguments, and will rest satisfied with assuring you, that you ought to return as quickly as possible, if you love your mother Madame de Sévigné, who will certainly take no care of her health, till you have set her heart at ease in this affair. I have received, with pleasure and the respect I owe you, the compliments you make me on the delivery of my daughter *. Believe me, Madame, it is impossible to honour you with more tenderness than I do.

Madame de Sévigné continues.

I am much afraid Madame de Coulanges will go to Lyons sooner than she thinks for, or than she wishes; her mother is dying. I will write you some time hence, to know how you intend to travel to Lyons, and from thence to Paris. You know what you are to meet with at Briare.

You are perfectly in the right, to lay aside your apprehensions on account of Maestricht and Philipburg: you will be astonished to find how well every thing has gone, and how much to our wishes. I am sorry for my evacuation of bilious matter, as we are upon the eve of a battle. Your sentiments are all worthy of a Roman matron; you are moreover the finest woman in France; you see your credit does not sink among us. Corbinelli has been here these two days; he is returned in haste to see the grand master, who is since returned from Albi. I have a notion Vardes † makes shift to do well enough without Corbinelli, but he is well enough satisfied with his continuing here in quality of his resident. It is he who keeps up the peace between Madame de Nicolai ‡ and her son-in-law; it is he who presides in all the projects formed for the little good lady §: nothing is done without Corbinelli; Corbinelli is the soul which moves all the springs of action. He

* The Princess d'Harcourt. See the Letter of 11 August, page 64.

† Francois-René du Bec, Marquis de Vardes, banished into Languedoc, on account of some court intrigues.

‡ Marie-Amelot, mother-in-law to Mr. de Vardes.

§ Marie-Elizabeth du Bec, married in 1678 to Louis de Rohan Chabot, Duke de Rohan.

spends

spends, however, very little at Vardes, and is at the same time genteel, but withal very discreet, as you know he is a philosopher. On the other hand, Corbinelli likes better to be here, on account of his infirm state of health, than in Languedoc; this I take to be the grand secret of his long stay at Paris.

Madam S——'s vision has vanished more quick than lightning; matters are now entirely made up. I am given to understand that, the other day at play, *Quanto* leaned his head in a very familiar posture on his lover's shoulder, as if she affected to signify by this behaviour, *I am now happier than ever.* Madame Maintenon is returned to her own habitation; it is impossible to express the high degree of favour she is in: it is said, Mr. de Luxemburg, by his late conduct, intended to put the finishing hand to Mr. de Turenne's funeral panegyric. They praise Mr. de Schomberg in the most lavish manner: they give him credit for a victory, supposing him to have fought a battle, so that he reaps the same honour almost as if he had really beaten the enemy. The good opinion the public has of this officer, is founded upon so many battles he has won, that one cannot help thinking that he must have got this also, had he fought: the Prince places no one on a level with him, in the esteem he has for him. With regard to my health, my dear child, it is as good as you could wish it; and when Brancas told you must take no care of it, it is because he wanted me to begin dipping my hands in the vintage ever since the month of July; but I am certainly going to use all the cures I told you of, that I may be before-hand with the winter; I shall go for a moment to Paris to see Mr. de la Garde's casket. I have seen it in distinct pieces, but I want to see the whole of it together. Farewel, lovely, my company are extremely uneasy at my absence. I will therefore close this packet.

L E T-

LETTER CCCLXXVI.

To the Same.

Paris, at Madam d'Escar's, Friday, 4 September,
1676.

I Dined at Livri, and came here at two o'clock : and here I now am, surrounded with all our fine dressers ; the linens appear to me perfectly beautiful and well chosen : in short, I am satisfied with every article of it, and do not doubt but it will give you every whit as much pleasure as it has done me : our stuffs have succeeded as well as heart could have wished. To say truth, they have cost me abundance of trouble : I am exactly in the situation of Moliere's physician, who wipes his brow as if he had performed a miracle in restoring speech to a young girl who had never been dumb. Yet for all that, we cannot sufficiently thank the good d'Escar ; she was really exceeding ill, and yet in spite of that took a world of pains in the execution of this commission : I could not think of letting so many fine things go, without first taking a parting glance at them. I am now writing to you, and without seeing a soul, return to Livri to sup with Madame de Coulanges and the *Worthy* ; I shall be there at seven : can any thing be more charming than to be at home even at the capital ? I have just now a billet from d'Haquerville, who thinks me at Livri : he will needs have me go to Vichi ; but I fear I should over-heat myself, and besides, I have not the least need for such a journey. I am now going to set about curing my hands with the greatest calmness imaginable, during this vintage ; I take these marks of his friendship in extreme good part, as I certainly ought, but will not for all that implicitly obey him : I have not a few grave characters on my side of the question, and what is a most powerful argument with me still, I find myself in perfect health.

Quanto has never once been at play, nor did he play more than once. They insist now on explaining every thing, every lady is a beauty ; but this is the language of courtiers : the beauty of beauties is gay and cheerful,

ful, which is as good a sign as can be. Madame Maintenon is returned; she promises Madame de Coulanges to take a journey for once purely on her account, a prospect which I assure you is far from turning her brain, whatever it might produce in others: she awaits her, with all the calmness in the world at Livry: nothing can be more obliging than she is to me. Marshal Albret is dying. D'Acqueville will inform you of the news of the Gazette, and of the great quantity of canon and powder we have taken.

The Kite is without her ring-dove, at least that of the highest flight. Do you not think she is a fool for her pains? is this a way to bring custom to her shop? Mr. de Marsillac is gone to Gourville and to Poictou; M. de Rochefoucault goes after them, though it is a jaunt of a month at the lowest computation. But now I think on't, my dear, methinks it is high time for you to begin talking of your own journey; are you not still in the same disposition for setting out on your side, as soon as your husband is willing on his? This forwardness is not only extremely favourable and convenient for you, but likewise gives me inexpressible satisfaction. I approve of your bathing extremely, it will hinder you from being altogether pulverized; therefore refresh yourself I say, and bring us as much good health as you possibly can muster up.

LETTER CCCLXXVII.

To the Same.

Paris, Tuesday Evening, 8 September, 1676.

I sleep at Paris, my dear girl. I came here this morning to dine with Madame de Villars, and to take my leave of her; it is no longer a thing to jest about, she goes away in good earnest on Thursday; and though she is very desirous to hear those three pretty words you have to say to her, she will not wait for you. She will not even wait the giving of the lieutenancy of Languedoc, notwithstanding all that common report says, about her having so great a hand in it. She is going in quest of a husband, and is to personate him at a fo-

a foreign court. Madame de Saint-Geran * seems overwhelmed with grief at this separation; she stays behind with no attendant, save her innate virtue, and without any support, but that of her good name alone. Half the world thinks it will be no hard matter to comfort her: for my own part, I really think the regrets so sweet and so agreeable a companion. Madame de Villars orders me to make you a thousand compliments: I regret this family exceedingly. Madame de Coulanges was with me; she returns to Livri as soon as she has been at Châville, where she has business. I am not in the least uneasy at her stay at Livri, complaisance has no pretensions to any share in it; she is in raptures with the place, and is the most agreeable company in the universe. You may well imagine we pass few dull moments. Corbinelli is often with us; so is Brancas and Coulanges, besides a world of comers and goers. Whom should we meet the other day at the end of the little bridge, but the Abbé de Grignan and the Abbé de St. Lac. I return to my forest to-morrow morning betimes. Corbinelli thinks my little physician a very great adept: the good man's powders have done me abundance of good; I am going to take a small pill every morning for some days, in order to remove the serosities which gathered last year in my poor body, for which they are a sovereign specific: afterwards I shall bathe my hands in the vintage, without intermitting the use of the remedies till they are perfectly cured, or till they tell me they are resolved never to be cured. As to the rest, I am in perfect health, and my small excursions to Paris, are rather a diversion than a fatigue to me. I take care never to expose myself to the night dews; and as for her ladyship the moon, I shut my eyes as often as I pass by the garden, in order to exclude the temptation *del demonio*. In a word, you have thoroughly convinced me that my health is one of your chief concerns, this thought makes me particularly careful of it, and manage it as a thing you hold dear, and which is indeed properly yours: you may assure yourself I shall give you a very good

* Francoise-Madeleine-Claude de Warignies, Countess of Saint-Geran.

account of it. My son informs me, that the brothers de Ripert, have performed prodigies of valour in the defence of Maestricht; I congratulate the Dean, as well as Mr. de Ripert, upon this occasion.

Wednesday Morning.

I have not slept over above well this evening, though I am in very good health, and am returning to my forest in the greatest hope, and even impatience of seeing you, tho two standing topics you know of my Letters, or rather of my reveries. I am sensible I ought to keep this in a great measure to myself, and it may sometimes prove impertinent, or at least unreasonable to trouble others with the subject of our thoughts.

LETTER CCCLXXVIII.

To the same.

Livri, Friday, 11 September, 1676.

YOU are extremely witty, I find, on the affair of our coadjutor. You are, it seems, for resuming those freedoms we made use of that year I was at Grignan; how we roasted him when he told us, that Mr. de Grignan said his coadjutor need be in no sort of apprehension on account of the gabelling * any place! I do not think there was a person of a happier turn for raillery than he is, not even M. de V_____, he who, if one may believe Madame Cornuel †, has placed a stout Swiss at his door; that is, given his wife a very pretty kind of ailment. The other day a very decrepit old woman (she was indeed a sight) presented herself before the King at dinner. The prince pushed her back, and asked her what she wanted: alas, Sir, said she, I would fain have prayed his Majesty to have got leave for me to speak to Mr. de Louvois. The King said to her, hark ye, good woman, there is Mr. de Rheims, he is a fitter person to speak to than me, he has a great deal more interest with him than I have. Every one present were delighted with this answer. Nantuil

* Gabelling is laying the *Gabelle*, or tax upon salt, which is one of the French King's greatest revenues.

† Madame Cornuel was famous for her bons mots.

uil *, on the other hand, begged of his Majesty that he would be pleased to order Mr. de Calvo to sit for his picture. He is forming a cabinet, in which it seems he intends to give him a place. Every thing you foresaw, has happened with respect to Maestricht, as if you had prophesied it. The King gave Mr. de Roquelaure yesterday the government of Guyenne : so a long expectation, you see, is well recompensed at last.

It is the general opinion that *Quante's* star begins to wane. Now nothing but tears, spleen, vexations, disappointments, and sometimes a gaiety which every body sees is forced. But what can one say ; every thing has an end. Every one is now upon the watch, and there is nothing but observing, conjecturing, divining, and faces are now thought to shine like stars of the first magnitude, that, but a month ago, were deemed unworthy to be compared with some others : in a word, the cards go merrily on, even whilst the fair is weeping away her eyes in her chamber. Some tremble with fear, whilst others laugh ; some are wishing for the continuance of things on their present footing, whilst others long for a change of the scene ; in short, here is a crisis worthy of attention, at least if we may give credit to those who affect to be the deepest in the secret. Little Rochefort † is to be married forthwith to her cousin de Nangis, she is but twelve years old. If she has a child soon, the Chancellor's lady may say, daughter, go tell your daughter, that her daughter's daughter is crying. Madame de Rochefort † is concealed in a convent all the while this match is making, and appears utterly inconsolable.

You know I returned here Wednesday morning : I find myself perfectly happy in being alone ; I walk abroad, I divert myself with reading, I work and go to church ; in short, I ask pardon of the company I expect, but I must own, I think I do wondrous well without them. My Abbé waited at Paris, that he might talk with your's, and to beg of him that he

* Famous for portraits in pastel, and a celebrated engraver.

† She was great grand-daughter of the Chancellor de Seguier's lady.

† Madeleine de Laval Bois-Dauphin, widow of Marshal de Rochefort, who died 22 May, 1676.

would

would deliver to Mr. Colbert the letter which Mr. de Grignan wrote him before he set out. Had the Abbé Tétu been here, I should have been glad of his company in the absence of Mr. de Grignan, but he it seems is in Touraine: it is true, he cannot bear either master or companion in the families whom he honours with his friendship. Yet can you think it possible he should be without either at our little friend's *? I tell him every day, that his regard for her must needs be very great, since he makes her put up with so many inconveniences; for in my opinion, the enduring the excessive heat of the dog-days, is every whit as disagreeable as the carnival season: by this means the whole year is but one continued penance. They pretend to say that the *Friend's + friend* is no longer what she has been, so that we must now give over our hopes from any abilities whatever, since this artful person we see could not weather the storm. Yours is a wonderful one indeed to endure your country blasts with so much patience, and even with good humour. When I find you in good spirits, which I can very well discover by your Letters, methinks I share your chearfulness and good humour: you are apprehensive you sometimes say silly things to me; my God! it is I who ought to make that complaint, who am constantly committing the fault: I am sure it is I who ought to blush at it, were it only when I think how much my years surpass yours, and how much younger I am in understanding. It is true, and I cannot help acknowledging, I should never have suspected you of calling la Garde *sweet soul*; it was really a charming fancy; but it almost kills me to think that this, after all, may be a sort of presage of your calling him soon by that pleasing title, *bon jeu, bon argent*. I am in hopes, however, you will acquaint me with the particulars of that match so long looked for. I am astonished he should be able to retain this notion in his head so long: it is a very strange kind of prospect for one, who could have done so well without it. When you do happen to say any thing that looks a little silly or frolicksome, methinks you

* Madame de Coulanges.

+ Madame Maintenon.

are then thinking of me. We laughed very heartily at Grignan. Nothing can possibly be truer or more just, than the picture you give us of la Vergne; I long to see him of all creatures living; I have never heard more said in praise of any man than of him. Did I inform you that Penautier takes the air sometimes in his prison? he sees all his friends and relations, and passes his time in admiring the injustice done him by the world: we admire it as much as he can do.

Madame de Coulanges acquaints me, she is vexed she cannot return these four or five days; that she is obliged to go about an intendancy, which she hears is vacant; that she is to wait on the King, and what is worse, on Mr. Colbert: I advise her to desire of the King, as the old woman did *, that his Majesty would be pleased to procure her an audience of Mr. Colbert; I told her, at the same time, to make use of her eyes and ears when she arrives in that part of the world, and to be sure she does not lose the use of her tongue when she comes here. She informs me, as she does others, that Madame de Soubise is set out for Lorges; this journey does great honour to her virtue. It is said there has been a thorough reconciliation, and possibly too much so. The Marshal d'Albert has left Madame de Rohan a hundred thousand livres, this methinks smells strong of restitution. My son acquaints me, that the enemy were for a very considerable while very near us; that on Mr. de Schomberg's approach, they retired; that on his nearer approach they retired still farther: in short, that they are now at the distance of six leagues, and will be soon at the distance of twelve; never were there so good-natured an enemy, *I love them most tenderly*; a pretty way of abusing words truly; but I have no other way of telling you I love you, but that by which I say I love the allies.

LETTER CCCLXXIX.

To the Same.

Livri, Wednesday, 16 September, 1676.

WHAT are you thinking of, my dear child, or what can you imagine by saying you are appre-

* See page 93.

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hensive of my taking my honest man's powders? they have really done me a world of good in all shapes; and in four hours after I have taken them, I feel myself just the same as if I had not taken any. This remedy, which has so frightened all the rest of the world, is grown so tame and so gentle with me, and we are become so well acquainted together in Britany, that we are for ever giving each other new proofs of mutual confidence and esteem; the powder by its good effects, and I by words only; but all is wholly founded on gratitude. Do not be uneasy about my stay at Livris; I find myself in perfect good health, live as I like, walk abroad much, read, have no sort of employment, and without setting up for one who loves to be an idler, nobody can possibly be fonder of the *far niente* of the Italians than I am. I should never have been prevailed upon to quit this place for Paris, were there not strong reasons which overcome this notion of mine; and could I be at ease in my mind, in failing in what I owe to my duty, I should make every whit as ill dispatch in the journey as even Madame de la Fayette herself. I never expose myself to the evening-damps, and let Madame de Coulanges go abroad by herself; Corbinelli stays at home to entertain me with great chearfulness, for you must know he is much more tender and delicate than I. Amonio makes me take a pill of a most approved sort, with a decoction of betony every morning; it is a most agreeable and wholesome purge for the brain, in short, it is the very thing I want: I shall continue the use of it for eight days, and then for the vintage. In a word I think of nothing but my health, this is what is now called eating sugar with sweatmeats. Therefore I would have you be in no pain about me, and to think only of administering the sovereign, and indeed the remedy you promised me last; I mean your most amiable company. Every body is dying at the Rocks and at Vichi of a flux and purple fever. Two of my workmen lost their lives by it; I tremble for Pilois; the millars, the farmers, in a word, every body have been attacked by these cruel diseases. As the wind blows from the parts where you are, I hope you will escape those gross vapours; we are all well here.

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E

your

your notion of it is not at all just. La Mousse is in Poitou, with Madame de Sancei. It is true, he and Corbinelli are too good friends to divert the spectators. Corbinelli thinks you as great a philosopher as Paré Malebranche himself: you may humble yourself as you please, he will be exalted in spite of you. I am now reading the little Marquis's book; I have likewise got that of M. d'Andilli, which is admirable; I am reading too the English Schism, which gives me much satisfaction; and besides all that, the angry performances of Father Bouhours and Menage, who are tearing one another's eyes out, to our great amusement. They tell one another their own, and are often very foul-mouthed: there are likewise remarks on the French language which are excellent; you cannot imagine what diversion this controversy affords us; I wonder the Jesuit should give himself such liberties as he does, since he has *our brethren* amongst the number of his hearers *, who will all on a sudden relieve him from his post, and that at a time when he least thinks of it; the laugh seems to be chiefly against him. The Father Prior was extreme good company to us, he is an excellent hand you know at such things. Ah, daughter, how must you have profited by such a one as Father Bossu †, who was here yesterday! it is the most learned man possible, and the most consummate Jansenist ‡, that is to say, Cartesian, that ever was; he was pleased to lower his tone, however, on certain topics. I took a sensible pleasure in hearing him speak; the Prior always led him into very pleasing walks; but I was always thinking of you, and could not help considering myself as a person unworthy of a conversation by which you must have profited so much, and in which you are extremely worthy to have born a part. Corbinelli worships this Father, and has been to pay him a visit to Sainte Genevieve; and when he comes here next, will find a way to bring them together again. Madame de Coulanges is still at Versailles; the

* Messieurs de Port-Royal

† Bené le Bossu, regular Canon of St. Genevieve, author of an excellent treatise on the Epic poetry.

‡ This conformity between the terms Jansenist and Cartesian relates to the arrêt of Despreaux in support of Aristotle's doctrine against reason. See this arrêt in Despreaux's works.

Worthy is at Paris; I am here alone, and yet am not alone, which gives me somewhat approaching towards uneasiness; for I could be content to be by myself a little. M. and Madame de Rèmes are here Mr. de Richelieu. Madame de Toisi, and a little girl that sings, came to dinner at their house the day before yesterday; I went there after dinner; we read there a minute account of the siege of Maestricht, which indeed is a very pretty affair; the brothers Ripert are taken notice of in a very handsome manner in it. Madame de Sonbise has gone away with no small pet, lest the very shadow of her spindle should give offence; it was a great culverin fired when people least thought of it, that alarmed the camp. I will tell you more of this, after I have seen the *Sylphide*. Amohio gives me leave to be here a while longer; the weather is too fine yet to chace me away, and I am going to set about curing my hands. I never say one word of Italian to him, and he, on the other hand, never speaks one word of French to me; this is what suits us and pleases us at the same time. There is great intriguing at Chelles for him; I fear he will never live to be old, it is a little insurrection. My lady supports him, the young folks abominate him, the old ones are for him, the confessors are envious of him, the Visitor condemns him for his mein: I could say a deal of nonsense about this affair. But let us talk of Philipburg, people now begin to think it will not be taken, its now only blockaded. The enemy's troops have decamped, in order to present their humble request to Mr. de Luxembourg to retire from Brisgau *, am I right? A province he is now laying waste, and which the Emperor values more than the taking of Philipbourg. Every thing contributes to the felicity of the King; for which cause, when I am apprehensive for my son, it is because its a common thing enough for private persons to suffer in public victories: but as the vassal of the state, I own I neither am, nor ever can be in any sort of apprehension. I am much more in pain for the vessel that bring's our cardinal's baggage, whose ill fortune never fails to make shipwreck

* A country in Germany, situated between the Rhine and the Black-forest.

of every thing : you have a share of it in your fortune, as well as a quarter in your arms. But I think too much and too often of your affairs ; I worship the Archbishop for the trouble he takes about them ; it is no small advantage ; but should no one at all think of them, what is then to become of this frail bark ? it is I who am to be at the helm in that case. I should be mighty glad Mazarques were come, with the leave of Mademoiselle de Mazarques. I shall see what the Marquis de Louvois intends to do, this will be attended with no cost ; and as for favours from his Majesty, we ought always to hope for them when we know we deserve them, as Mr. de Grignan certainly does. There's Mr. de Roquelaure for you, what an example of patience ! there is not any courtier that has greater cause of complaint than he has. I should rather go to Provence to pay a visit to the Archbishop, than I would to your prior who cures all evils.

I heard an account yesterday of the *Malade imaginaire*, which I have not seen ; the hero of the piece is entirely under the management of these gentlemen, whose prescriptions he follows with the most scrupulous exactness : sixteen drops of elixir in thirteen spoonfuls of water ; should there happen to be fourteen, it is all over with him. He takes a small pill, and is told he must walk in his chamber ; when presently he discovers a dreadful and most embarrassing difficulty, which is to know whether he is to walk the utmost length of his chamber, or only the breadth of it. I could not help laughing most heartily at this ; and they are for ever making applications of this folly, you may guess to whom.

What you tell me of the Grand Master's wealth, is really pleasant. Pray God he would give Corbinelli a pension, and take him home to his house ! for it is a huge philosopher truly. After I shall have seen Madame Schomberg, I shall take occasion to let her know what a world of good you have said of the Abbé de la Vergne, she will be perfectly charmed to hear it. I have learnt too, that it is a much more difficult matter for some folk to become a Christian than it is to become a Catholic.

I am

I am extremely desirous the casket should come to your hands, and to hear how you like it: and pray how comes it this same marriage seems always so backward. God forgive me, it is much like la Brinvilliers, who has been thinking these eight months, of dispatching her father. Ah! my God, what a world! Burn this Letter immediately; my compliments and respects to all the Grignans, and to our friends at Aix. I compel Roquesante to be ungrateful, by the downright love and esteem I bear towards her.

L E T T E R CCCLXXX.

To the Same.

Livri, Friday, 18 September, 1676.

POOR Madame de Coulanges is in a violent fever, attended with paroxysms: The fit seized her at Versailles, it is to-morrow the fourth day; she has been let blood, and should the distemper continue, she must certainly loose every drop of blood in her body, so great is the esteem they entertain for her at that place. Her little breast is prodigiously offended with this impudent fever; and I am no less so: it is impossible for me to recollect all she writes me about the distress she is in on account of her not returning here, without being greatly moved with it. I intend to go to see her to-morrow; but must absolutely be here on Sunday, in order to begin my vintage. You have great reason to be satisfied with my employing so much of my time, as I intend to employ, in hopes of curing my hands. Corbinelli has sent me back the Letter you wrote him, it is really one of the prettiest compositions I ever beheld: I will certainly shew it to Father la Bossu * for he is my Malebranche †; he will be charmed with the good sense you discover in that Letter; he will answer you if he is able; for he is none of those who supply the want of arguments, with much chaff of words. I am

* See the Letter of 16 September, page 96. † Nicholas Malebranche, priest of the oratory, author of the book called *Recherche de la Verite*, and of several other works highly esteemed. He was one of the best writers, as well as one of the greatest philosophers of his time. See his elogium by M. de Fontenelle. Hist. de l'Acad. de Sciences.

sure you will like the attleſſ perspicuity of his ſtyle and conveſation; he is nephew to that M. de la Lane, that had the handsome wife. Cardinal de Retz has talked to you a thouſand times of her heavenly charms. He is nephew to that great Abbé de la Lane the Jansenift; the whole race inheriſt good ſenſe, but he in an extraordinary manner; in ſhort, he is couſin to that little la Lane that dances.

You ſee how I have entangled myſelf in particu‐
lars, all this was highly neceſſary no doubt. The
little ſketch of politics in the manner of Corbinelli,
is excellent: as for that, it may be underſtood without
an interpreter; on which account I ſhall con‐
ſult no one about it. Marshal Schoraberg has at‐
tacked the rear-guard of the enemy; he muſt cer‐
tainly have cut them to pieces, had he purſued with
a more numerouſ body of troops; a party of forty dra‐
goons ſacrificed their lives like ſo many heroes; one
called d'Aigremont was killed on the ſpot; the ſon of
Bussy, who wanted to get to the farther ſide of para‐
dife, is paſtore and the Count de Vaux, always among
the foremost; but the reſt of the army was wholly
idle, ſo that five hundred horſe made all this havock.
They ſaid, it is pity this detachment had not been
ſtronger; but I conſtantly ſee it come to paſſ, that he
who plans things beſt is often deceived. Even the
Worthy has ſometimes been out in her caclulations; ſhe
preſents her moſt hearty reſpects to you; for my own
part, I think a thouſand times a day of the pleaſure I
ſhall have to ſee you here.

LETTER CCCLXXXI.

To the Same.

Livri, Monday, 21 September, 1676.

NO, my dear child, it is not because I want to
ſave you the diſagreeableness of a journey in the
month of December, that I intreat you to come here in
October; no, it is merely because I would have the
pleaſure to ſee you two months ſooner by that means.
I have taken ſufficiently upon me in not making uſe of
the power you have given me over you, by ordering
you

you to come here this summer. You must absolutely make me amends for this piece of complaisance, and if you do not mean to carry your irresolution beyond all bounds, you will set out exactly in the manner agreed upon between us; that is, when Mr. de Grignan goes to his assembly: this is the precise time I shall reckon myself obliged to you for, as I shall then be able to promise for myself. This is what my friendship tells me I ought to expect from yours, so say no more of this. As for my health, be under no sort of concern about it; I bathe my hands twice a day in the must of the vintage; this gets into my head a little; but I am persuaded, by what every body tells me, I shall be the better for it. Should I prove mistaken, Vichi will then come upon the carpet; in the meanwhile, I do every thing I am bid, and walk both lengthways and across my room, with the most scrupulous obedience imaginable. I shall not push my stay in this place beyond the fine season; I am under no sort of obligation to do so, and therefore would not promise I shall wait here for the fogs of October. Did I tell you Segrais* has married a very rich cousin of his own? she who would never, she said, marry any one of equal wealth with herself, alledging they would certainly despise her, and that she had rather marry a cousin of her own.

I would gladly know the reason why you forbid me to write you long Letters, since it is to me the most pleasing of all employment, especially when I cannot have your company. You threaten me with returning them unopened, I should be exceeding sorry to pay the postage of them; they are stuffed with such multitudes of trifles, that I am sometimes vexed to think, that even you yourself should pay for them: but if you really desire to rid yourself of that mortification, come, come and see me, come and scratch the pen out of my hands, come and be my governess, and then twit me with the wretched things I have writ you. This will be the best and the only way to prevent the swelling of my limbs, and indeed to restore me to the enjoyment of perfect health.

* Jean Renaud de Segrais of the French academy.

Phillipsburg is taken at last, and I wonder at it. I did not think our enemies knew how to take a town; I therefore asked, in the first place, to know who it was that took this, and whether it might not be ourselves; but no, it is even they, it seems.

LETTER CCCLXXXII.

To the Same.

Paris, 25 September, 1676, at Madame de Coulanges's.

IN good troth, daughter, here's a poor little woman very sick: this is the eleventh day of her illness, which took her at Châville as she was returning from Versailles. Madame de Tellier was seized with it at the same time that she was, and returned immediately to Paris, where she received the sacrament yesterday. Beaujen, Madame de Coulanges's gentlewoman, was struck with the same arrow: she has always kept company with her mistress; not a single medicine was prescribed for my lady's chamber that was not ordered, at the same time, in the maids, purge for purge, bleeding for bleeding, sacrament for sacrament; the paroxysms of the disorder, the raving, all were exactly alike in both. God grant this fellowship may not last too long. Beaujeu has just received the sacrament of extreme unction, and, it is thought, will hardly live till next morning. We are in fear of a return of Madame de Coulanges's fit as to-morrow, it being precisely the same which keeps company with that which has now attacked this poor creature. It must be owned it is a dreadful disorder indeed: I have been witness to the terrible bleedings the physicians prescribe the poor folks who happen to be afflicted with it; but as I am sensible that I have no veins, I declared openly to the first President of the court of aids, that if ever I am dangerously ill, I shall certainly beg them to send me M. de Sanguin the very first moment of it; I am firmly resolved on it. The very sight of these gentlemen, is enough to fright one from ever letting them get possession of one's body. The death of poor Beaujeu is their last exploit. I have thought of Moliere a hundred times, since I have seen these scenes. I am, however, in hopes this poor woman

woman may possibly escape, after all their abominable prescriptions; she is pretty calm at present, and in a slumber, which will give her strength to undergo the return of this night.

I have seen Madame de Saint-Geran, who is by no means low-spirited: her house will be a constant place of resort, where Mr. de Grignan will pass his evenings very amorously. She is going to Versailles with the rest of them; I can assure you she intends to enjoy the fruits of her œconomy, and to live on the credit of the reputation she has acquired; it will be a considerable while before she has exhausted the stock she has acquired. She sends you a thousand compliments, is very fat, and as well as can be. You tell me wonders of the friendship of Roquesante; I am by no means surprised at it, I who know his heart as well as I do. He merits, in many respects, the distinction and amity you shew him. I am perfectly well, and am overjoyed I had not begun the vintage, I shall use the other remedies; and when this poor little woman is recovered, I shall go and rest myself for a few days at Livry. Branca has come to-night on foot, a horse-back, and in a cart; he swooned away at the foot of the poor sick person's bed: no friendship can appear before his. That I entertain for you is far from being small.

I found at Paris an affair blown all over the town, which will appear extremely ridiculous to you: there are abundance of folks that will tell you of it; but it seems as if you see those things better in my Letters. There was at court a sort of agent of the King of Poland *, who was buying up all the finest estates for his master. In short, he had fixed upon that of Rieux in Britainy, for which he had signed a contract for five hundred thousand livres. This agent demanded that this estate or manor should be erected into a dutchy, and the title left blank; he took care to have all sorts of fine privileges and rights annexed to it, and these both male and female, and what not. The King, and indeed every body else, thought it must be either for the Marquis d'Arquen, or the Marquis de Bethune. This agent has presented to the King a Letter from the

* John Sobieski.

King of Poland, naming the person it is for, guess who? who but Brisacier, son of the Maitre des comptes; he had made himself taken notice of by a prodigious and extravagant equipage, and by running into a most ridiculous expense in the world took it for granted he was really a fool, which is no great rarity. It would seem the King of Poland, by I do not know what sort of divination, has found out that Brisacier is originally from Poland, so that, by this means, his name is lengthened out by an additional *ski*, and himself become a Pole. The King of Poland adds, that Brisacier is his relation, and that when formerly in France, he was going to have married his sister; he has sent his mother a golden key, as Lady of honour to the Queen. Slander gave out for diversion, that the King of Poland also for diversion, had had some slight hankering after the mother, and that this little boy was his son; but the affair was not so for all that, the chimera rests wholly on the good house of Poland. The little agent, however, has blown the whole affair, thinking the business as good as concluded; and the King, as soon as he came to know the truth of the matter, has treated this agent as an insolent fool, and has ordered him to leave Paris, giving him to know, that had it not been out of his regard for the King of Poland, he would have him sent to the Bastile. His Majesty has written to the King of Poland, complaining, in a friendly manner, of this intended insult or profanation of the highest honour of the kingdom; and considers the protection the King of Poland gives this diminutive creature, as an imposition on his understanding, and even calls in question the legality of the character with which he pretends to be invested. He leaves it in the option of Mr. de Pomponne to dilate on so fertile a topic. It is said this little agent has made off; so that this affair will probably sleep till the return of the courier.

LETTER CCCLXXXIII.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday, 30 September, 1676.

I Tell you a story, it is no more than Tuesday; but I begin my Letter however in order to answer yours, and that I may talk to you about Madame de Coulanges, and will make an end of it to-morrow, which will actually be Wednesday.

It is now the fourteenth day of Madame de Coulanges's illness; the physicians will not as yet take upon them to promise any thing, because the fever still continues, and in her perpetual ravings, they have reason to be afraid of her becoming insensible. However, as the returns are weaker, there is all the reason in the world to think that all will be well. They wanted to have given her a vomit this morning, but found her reason so far lost, that it was impossible to prevail with her to take any more of it than five or six pitiful gulps, that had not half the desired effect. It would seem to me, as if you took a pleasure in being uneasy about my continuing in the feverish air of this house; I do assure you I am as well as you would wish me to be. M. de Coulanges is extremely desirous I should be here: I am sometimes in the chamber of the sick person, sometimes in the garden, I come and go when I will, chat with a multitude of different folks, walk abroad; so that I am in no sort of danger of catching the fever; in short, daughter, you need be in no manner of uneasiness about my health.

Poor Amour is no longer at Chelles; he was obliged to yield to the commands of the visitor; Madame* is highly nettled at this affront, and in order to be revenged, has shut up all the avenues to her house, in such manner, that my sister de Biron, my nieces de Biron, my sister in law de Loffe, all the friends, all the cousins, all the neighbours, and all the world besides are refused access. All the parlours are shut up, all the meagre days are kept, the matins are always sung

* Marguerite-Guonne de Loffe, Abbess of Chelles.

without

without the misrecorde ; a thousand little relaxations of discipline are reformed ; and when any complaint is made of it, *Alas ! I must cause the rule to be observed* ; but you was not wont to be so severe, I was in the wrong for so doing ; I repent heartily of it. In a word, one may call Amonio the reformer of Chelles. This trifle must have diverted you ; and in good sooth, you may say what nonsense you will on this head, I am notwithstanding full of the notion of Madame's wisdom ; though it is this very circumstance that renders the matter utterly inconceivable. Amonio is with M. de Nevers ; he is dressed like a Prince, and the best conditioned soul alive. He has sat up five or six nights with Madame des Coulanges : I will assure you he is as great an adept as any of them ; but his whey beard is not fit to appear in the presence of M. Brayer. They all told me the vintage of this year, would certainly prove an empiric to me, and that my being persuaded from it was a piece of good fortune I little deserved. You will ask me, who spoke to me of it at first ? I answer all the world, and Veson as fast as any of them ; but he has thought better of it, and I am heartily glad of it.

Every body is of opinion the lover's passion is no more, and that *Quanto* is embarrassed between the consequences which might have followed the return of favour, and the danger of discontinuing them, for fear they might be sought after in some other quarter : on the other hand, it will be wrong to imagine their friendship alone will content her, and so much beauty, accompanied with so much pride, is with infinite difficulty, if ever, brought to put up with the second place in power. Jealousy, 'tis true, is extremely quick-sighted, but did you ever know that restless passion prevent any thing ? It is certain he has shewn a certain bickering after the *good woman* ; but even granting all you have said to be perfectly just, she is still a different person, and that you know alters the case prodigiously. Many are of opinion she is too well tutored, to display the standard of such a piece of perfidy, with so small an appearance of enjoying it for any time ; she would then

then be directly exposed to the fury of *Quanto*; she would shew the first example of infidelity, and would serve as a thoroughfare to others, who are both younger, and more likely to excite desire: in the mean time every body is on the watch, and 'tis thought time will make some discoveries. The *good woman* has asked leave of her husband; and since his return she appears abroad with nothing in her drefs or otherwise, than she used to do.

Did I tell you that the good Marchioness des Huxelles has the small pox? 'Tis thought, however, she will get the better of this dreadful disorder, which is no small miracle at her age and mine.

It is now Wednesday evening. The poor sick body is at last out of danger; at least without some accident, which it is impossible to foresee. As for Beaujeu, she was actually departed, till such time as the vomit raised her from the dead; so 'tis no such easy matter to die as some people think so.

LETTER CCCLXXXIV.

To the same.

Paris, Friday, 2 October, 1676.

ACCORDING to my ancient and most laudable custom, I am come this morning into the Marques's chamber: the moment she saw my joyous countenance, she seemed apprehensive of my intentions, and at the same time threw me down this sheet of paper; but her generosity was not quite so great as it seemed to be, as she intends to make use of it partly herself, which I agree to with all my heart. I will therefore tell you in *poché parole*, my lady Countes, that we are still in the dark as to the remaining part of the campaign. Will M. de Lorrain remain * for ever with folded arms? *Ecco il panto?* We are also in qualms about M. de Zell's march towards the Moselle. M. de Schomberg should have passed the Sambre on the 27th, in his march to-

* Prince Charles of Lorrain had just taken Philippsburg, after the siege of twenty-four days after breaking ground.

wards

LETTERS OF THE
DUC DE MONTAIGNE

wards Philipville : it will be easy for him then to send reinforcements to M. de Crequi.

I suppose you know all the cabals of the conclave ; if your friend should arrive at the sovereign eminence, methinks it would be no bad thing for you to take a trip to Rome, to offer him your service ; you will have time enough, if it be true, that the election is not to happen soon, I passed part of yesterday at Richlieu's gate ; I found the ladies entirely engrossed with deciding the important question of dress : what I am able to tell you is, that the *Ange* will be one of the most superb ornaments that woman ever wore. I grumbled, according to my old will, at the exorbitant expence of it, but received no other satisfaction than that of being treated as an old fool and a pantaloon. I took all in good part, as I found myself but little the worse for it. They wanted sadly to have had some discourse with me, about borrowing of jewels, but I took care to keep clear of the snare, and was always running down such kind of familiarities. We are to have Madame de Verneuil with us here on Monday : she is coming to make herself ready for her journey into Languedoc. *Maneirosa* is to come down with her to stay some days with us, after which she sets out for the Loire. I am, with all due respect, wholly yours and the Count's.

Madame de Sévigné continues.

You know the fat Abbé, and how glad he is to save a scrap of paper ; fortunately I am still better pleased, to furnish him with what he wants. He is at present prodigiously cast down at a sad accident that has happened to him : you must know he has given his valet an old cloak, which he wore only a whole year, thinking he had had two ; the mistake is obvious, was he not excessively generous : For my part, I think him as much an original in matter of œconomy, as the Abbé de la Victoire is in regard to covetousness.

Here's news from Madame de Castres *, who acquaints me that Odescalchi is Pope : you must have known it before it could reach us. In short, our Cardinals are now returning : should they come by way of

* Elizabeth de Bonzi, sister to the Cardinal of that name.

Piòvence,

Provence, you will see them before you set out. Do you know that little Amonio is riding post on his way to Rome? His uncle, that is to say, a different person from him that was about the deceased Pope's person *; he is one who is groom of the bed-chamber to the new Pope †. So you see his fortune is made, and he will no longer stand in need of the favours of Madame des Chelles, or any of her nuns. It is now Friday, child, and I ought by this time to have been at Livri, as the weather is so delightfully fine, and Madame des Coulanges out of all danger, enjoying all the pleasure of her recovery; not to mention that I should be glad to know whether M. de Pomponne has concluded our affair this morning, that I may be able to send you his letter this evening. I want likewise to thank him, and to speak with Parére; after which I shall be perfectly easy, and shall go to-morrow, or Sunday, to Livri.

Madame Maintenon came yesterday to see Madame Coulanges; she expressed a great deal of concern for what this poor sick person had suffered, and was overjoyed at her recovery, or rather resurrection. The lovers were together all day yesterday. The wife was come to Paris. They dined together; there was no playing in public. In short, joy is now returned, and all our fears and jealousies entirely vanished. As there is nothing but changes in this world, and these sometimes all on a sudden from opposite extremes; the great woman is returned by water, and is now as well with the *beauty*, as she was formerly ill with her. Their rancour is softened; and, in short, what they tell us to-day, they unsay to-morrow: this is by no means the region of immutability. I conjure you, my most amiable daughter, not to imitate those great folks with regard to your setting out, and to consider that we are now arrived at the second of October. As for my health, be under no concern about it: Livri, whatever you may think of it, is going to do me a world of good, during the remaining part of the fine season. Say nothing to T_____, I beseech you, though I love him for his willingness to be obliging to

* Clement X. † Odescalchi, elected Pope the 21st September took the name of Innocent XI.

you *in ogni modo*, as for example, his telling you he saw me; this little lie proceeds from something good at bottom; I assure, my beauty, I never once cast my eyes on him, and did not so much as know of his being at Paris. Langlade had like to have died at Frêne of the same disease that Madame des Coulanges had, with this exception that he was still in a very bad way, and had received the sacrament of extreme unction: Madame le Tellier is likely to pay dearly, and is exceeding ill. Farewel, my dear Countess, I embrace the Count and the pretty *pichons*; my God, how dear I find you are all to me! I exhort you to read father Bossu, he has composed a small treatise on the Art of Poetry *, which Corbinelli rates an hundred times higher than that of Despréaux.

LETTER CCCLXXXV.

To the Same.

Livri, Wednesday, 7 October, 1676.

I Write to you now as it were *per avance*, as they say at Provence, to let you know that I returned hither on Sunday, in order to pass the remaining part of the fine season, and to rest myself after my fatigue. I find myself in perfect good health, and the solitary life I lead, is far from being disagreeable to me, especially as I know it is soon to have an end. I am going to try at some little cures for my hands, and that purely out of complaisance to you, for to tell truth, I have no great faith in them: but, if you go to that with it, I must needs tell you, that this is the chief, if not the only reason, I take any care of myself at all; especially as I am persuaded, that no human art can possibly put off the allotted time but for one moment:

* There seems to be no kind of relation between the two works here mentioned. The first, which is in prose, is a pretty diffusive treatise on the epic poem in particular; and the other, which is in verse, comprehends the art of poetry in general, but in a very concise manner, and in imitation of Horace's Art of poetry: so that father Bossu's work may be esteemed and praised with great justice, without, however, giving it the preference to that of the Art poetique of Despreaux, which is a master-piece of didactic poetry.

yet for all that, I follow the plain maxims of what is called human prudence, as I have a notion that, by this very attention chiefly, the eternal and immutable decrees of providence are fulfilled: you may then conclude, dear daughter, that no attention will be wanting in me for that end, as I hold this as an essential part of that obedience which all creatures owe to their Creator. This you will say is a great lecture indeed; and indeed it is e'en high time I should begin the sequel of my proceedings during my last stay at Paris, which was for about a fortnight. You know how I spent the Friday, and how I waited on M. de Pomponne. We were of opinion, d'Hacqueville and I, that you had reason to be satisfied with the regulation you know of, since, you see; the King consents, that the Lieutenant shall be treated with the same honours with the governor: a very important business truly. On the Saturday, M. and Madame de Pomponne, Madame de Vins, d'Hacqueville, and the Abbé de Feuquieres, came to take me with them on a jaunt to Conflans. The weather was extremely pleasant, and we found the house much finer than it had been in M. de Richelieu's time. There are six admirable fountains, which are supplied by machines from the riever, and which will never run dry whilst that has a drop of water left in it. 'Tis a pleasure when one thinks of this plentiful supply of water, whether for bathing, or even quenching one's thirst. M. de Pomponne was extremely chearful and good-humoured; we had a deal of discourse, and laughed the whole day from morn till night. With this natural gravity and sagacity he told us, he thought the house, and every thing about it, had a certain venerable and *cathedral-like air* *. This little party gave infinite pleasure to the whole company, and you may be assured, you were not forgotten. The dream of the little good body has vanquished in the twinkling of an eye; though she is not of opinion that fear is the sole motive of attachment to *Quanto*. As for M. de Marsillac's journey, I would not have you think it the effect of stratagem or finesse in the least, it has been exceeding short, and he is now as well with

* This house belongs to the Archbishop of Paris.

the King as ever ; he never once stopped for amusement, nor ever went one single step out of his way ; he carried Gourville with him, who has seldom much time to spare, and walked him round his estate like some great river, which falls and enriches the soil wherever it flows. As for M. de Rochefoucault, he went with the fondness of a child, to see Vernueil once more, and those places where he was formerly wont to hunt with so much pleasure, I cannot add, and the scenes and haunts of his former loves, I cannot believe he ever knew what the passion meant. I'll return with slower pace than his son, and go into Touraine to pay a visit to Madame de Valentine, and the Abbé d'Effiat. He was extremely anxious about Madame des Coulanges, who is now recovering from one of the most dangerous disorders that it is possible for any one to be in. Neither the fever nor the fits have as yet entirely left her ; but as it is now past the height, and as she is no longer subject to any ravings, she may safely say she is on the high way to get the better of it. Madame de la Fayette is now at St. Mour. I have been there but once yet : she is still affected with the pain in her side, which hindered her from going to see Madame des Coulanges, for whom she was exceedingly concerned : the same reason prevented her visiting Langlade, who was very dangerously ill of the same disease with Madame des Coulanges, and had received the sacrament of extreme unction, which was even a step beyond her. In short, she is now better in every respect, and that without ever stirring from the spot where she was first taken ill. I told Madame des Coulanges the other day, that Beauseu had had the extreme unction administered to her, and that they had performed the Jesus Maria for her. She answered me with a voice, which sounded as if it came from the other world : Eh ! why do not they perform it for me ? I am sure I deserve it full as well as she does. What say you to this strange kind of ambition ? I would have you write to little Coulanges ; he deserves compassion as much as any body can do : had he lost his wife, he had really lost his all, and to speak more properly, had been absolutely undone. I could not help being very much moved, at her causing a letter

a letter to be writ to M. de Gué *, to recommend M. des Coulanges to him, and that from motives of justice and conviction, acknowledging that she had ruined him, and requesting this favour of M. and Madame de Gué, as the last testimony of her friendship for her ; she asked their pardon and blessing at the same time. I do assure you it was really a very affecting scene. You will therefore write to this poor little man, who seems very happy in the notion of enjoying my friendship : and to tell you the truth, it is on such occasions as these, that one ought to shew it.

Your little German appears extremely dextrous in managing the good Abbé : he is as beautiful as an angel, and at the same time as modest and discreet as a maid. He is going to speak German at M. de Strasbourg's. I have given him a word of good council about his behaviour ; but I defy you to guess his name ; you may guess till you are tired, you'll never be able to hit it till I tell you, for it is always *Autrement*. A very happy name for such folks as delight in puns and conundrums.

Madame de Cornuel was to visit B**** the other day, who used her exceeding ill ; she waited, it seems, till she could speak with him, in an anti-chamber, where there was nobody but a parcel of lacqueys. At last there came to her a man who seemed somewhat civilier than the rest, who told her that was no place for her to be in. O Sir ! said she, I am well enough here ; I am under no apprehensions from their ill-behaviour, whilst they remain lacqueys ; 'tis afterwards that they grow saucy and insolent. This made M. de Pomponne almost burst with laughing ; you know what sort of laughs his are ; I am sure it cannot fail to divert you as well as him.

The Cardinal writes me that he has made a Pope, and assures me, that he is far from having any qualms of Conscience about the matter. You know in what manner he eluded the snare of sacrilege and perjury in this affair : the rest must have enjoyed it with a prodigious gust, since there there was no manner of necessity for

* Father to Madame des Coulanges, who was intendant of Lyons.

committing

committing either. He informs me his Holiness is not only so in title, but even is more so in his life and conversation, that he writ to you from Lyons as he went, and will not have it in his power to see you as he returns, for which he alledges the same argument of the gallies, which vexes him exceedingly, so that he will soon be at home, and just as great as if nothing at all happened. This journey has done him a great deal of honour; for nothing can excel the wisdom and felicity that has attended all his measures. It is even the general opinion, that by the excellent choice he has made of a sovereign Pontiff, he has brought down the Holy Ghost into the conclave, after an exile of a vast number of years: though after such exiles as this, who will wonder at his banishment from councils of a nature purely human!

So then you are now in the midst of solitude. It is now you ought to be afraid of spirits: I am now going to lay a wager, that there are not above a hundred souls in your chateau. I am entirely convinced as to the irresistible amiableness of the beauteous Rochebonne: but Corbinelli's constancy is immersed in such an ocean of philosophy, and is so immovably fixed to his syllogisms and argument, that I can no longer answer for his behaviour. He says that father Bossu does not answer your questions properly; that it would be folly in him to pretend to instruct you, and that you know more of the matter than them all. You will write us word what you think of the affair.

I think I wrote you the history of Brisacier *; it is impossible to say any thing further of it till the return of the courier from Poland. He no longer appears, however, at Paris, or at court; he may be said properly to besiege the town, since he lives entirely among his friends in the environs. He was at Chichi the other day; Madame de Plessis came from Frêne to see him, that she might console on account of the breaking off of his bargain: Brisacier assured her it was no such thing as broken, and that as soon as the courier was returned, the world would see whether he was the fool

* This affair is related in a pretty circumstantial manner in the Memoirs de l'Abbé de Choisi.

they

they thought him or not. Whether it is the King or the Queen of Poland, or whether any of them be his protector, we shall be able, as you wisely hint, to form a judgment hereafter.

M. de Bussi is just come whilst I am writing this letter ; I shewed him how mindful you were of him, he will let you know by his own hand how much he is obliged to you for this civility. He read to me some of the most entertaining memoirs that were ever seen : they are not to be printed, though I am sure they deserve it full as well as many things that are.

We have this moment intelligence that Brisacier and his mother, who were at Gagni, hard by this, have been taken up : 'tis a bad omen, if true, with respect to the affair of the dukedom. This news, is perhaps rather too fresh, and possibly premature, at least in the manner 'tis handed about at Paris. But d'Hacqueville will not fail to inform you of the particulars.

I have now, my child, yours of the 30th. But strange ! Is it possible you should not have received mine of the 21st, it was filled with the finest exhortations imaginable ; I had there determined and decided the affair of your setting out, and conjured you, out of pure love and regard, not to delay it a moment ; 'tis what I now beseech you to do, and by the same motives : you will assuredly follow the advice I give you, at least, if you have that regard for me which I believe you have ; from the persuasion I entertain of this, I shall waive saying any thing more about it, how much I desire it, and what a prodigious addition a delay of six weeks must necessarily be to my anxiety. Madam de Soubise is gone to Flanders to see her husband, who is sick, which I approve of exceedingly. See the Hague Gazette. I embrace you a thousand times, my dearest creature, with a fondness infinitely beyond what I am capable of expressing.

LETTER

LETTER CCCLXXXVI.

To the Same.

Livry, Friday, 9 October, 1676.

I AM sorry, my dearest, the post should have delayed my letters for some days. I know the regard you have for me, and how anxious you are about me ; but, 'tis only applying to the great d'Haquerville, where I am sure of all the assistance I can possibly desire. I shall never forget, whilst I live, the pleasure and consolation I enjoyed at the rocks, from one of his epistles, when you had been just brought to bed ; and I may safely say, that had it not been for that letter, I should never have been able to support the excessive grief I then underwent. I persuade myself you will have grounds to be satisfied by to-morrow, at least if Madame de Bagnol's laquey, concerning whose care I am not without some slight apprehension, has taken care to put my letters into the post-office. You will have seen in that, if it be come to hand, my answer to your's, wherein you desire me to wait the arrival of M. de Grignan. I there likewise told you, that the season being considerably advanced, was by no means what made me wish so earnestly to see you before M. de Grignan could arrive ; but that it was wholly owing to the extreme desire I had of seeing you, which made me conjure you to favour me with this small advance of pleasure, which I might very well pretend to claim, on account of my singular moderation, in that of not insisting upon your quitting your castle, till such time as M. de Grignan should depart for the assembly ; that I had laid my account with having you every moment of the time, you gave me a right and title to ; and that, in short, I conjured you, as I now actually do, to think in good earnest, of setting out this very month, according to the agreement we had come to. I flatter myself M. de Grignan will think me extremely just and upright in all this. I have sent you the little sum you will have occasion for till he comes : I think you had best travel in a litter as far as Rouane, and then take water to Briare, where my coach will meet you.

This,

This, daughter is what is most material in my letter, in case, as it is likely enough, it should happen to be lost.

The Abbé de Bayard acquaints me, that I did extremely well in not going to Vichi this season: that the continual rains have almost entirely spoiled the waters; that Saint Herem and Planci, who went there on purpose, did not use them; that the only person who took them, was M. de Champâtreux, who was by no means satisfied with their effect: in a word, his letter has afforded me infinite satisfaction: I was at a loss how to account for my own obstinacy, and find this to have been the very thing that caused it. I am now using a kind of mish-mash for my hands, made of deer's marrow, and Hungary water, which, according to some is to perform miracles. But what has really done me a great deal of service, is the miraculous fine weather we have had; that is those charming clear sun-shining days in the Autumn, when 'tis neither hot nor cold: in a word, I am quite transported with them; I walk abroad from ten in the morning till five in the afternoon, without losing one single second; at which hour I retire to my apartment with the most perfect submission; though it is not without a considerable mortification, finding by this, and to my no small regret, what a wretched mortal I am, who by a most silly timidity am forced to break with my charming cool of the evening, the oldest friend I have in the world, and whom, perhaps, I accuse very unjustly of being the author of all my ails. I then fling myself into the church, where I remain without ever once lifting up my eye-lids, till they come to tell me there are lights in my apartment. I must absolutely have such a degree of obscurity, such as is that I find in some parts of the church, or such a gloom as the woods afford, or else three or four people to chat with: in a word, I follow your prescriptions with most scrupulous exactness.

The news about Brisacier is entirely confirmed; it has been discovered by his letters to the King of Poland, that he laboured what he could to bring him to renounce the friendship of our monarch; so he is now

in the bastile, and his fate hangs in the scales suspended betwixt the gallows and a dukedom.

As for what relates to Germany, there is a world of things to be said. The General has met with a small mortification in relation to the escorting of a convoy; he has been under a necessity to draw nearer to us, and leaves these brutal Germans as soon as he shall have repassed the Rhine, to lay siege to Brissac, as they did last year to Philipsburg. It would be really stupid enough were this to happen. There is much dissention in this army, I mean that of M. de Luxembourg. I have just now a billet from M. d'Haueville, who was at Versailles on Wednesday, in order to expedite and dispatch the regulation for the assembly. I must needs acknowledge that never was there such a friend as he is. The moment you have recommended any business to his care, he is so exceeding diligent and punctual in acquitting himself of it, that one would often be tempted to think he had nothing in the world besides to mind but that.

LETTER CCCLXXXVII.

To the Same.

Begun at Livri, and ended at Paris, 14 October, 1676.

I Cannot help thanking you for your great complaisance to me, and for the regard you shew to me in the resolution you have come to, of setting out before M. de Grignan. I embrace, and thank him too, for his goodness in consenting to it. I am at no loss to know, what he suffers from your absence, but it is for so short a while, that he ought not to grudge me this satisfaction: his share of your company is always infinitely superior to mine. I now earnestly recommend it you, to provide a good guide and conductor for your journey; it gives me pain to think of the irksomeness it will be attended with; I would confide you to the care of Montgobert: be sure to carry books with you; and for heaven's sake caution your muleteers against taking any short cuts, in the way from your house to Montelimart; let them keep the coach road. They brought Madame des Coulanges the way

I just

I just now mentioned, and had it not been for du But, who alighted in an instant, and supported the litter, she had fallen over a most dreadful precipice ; he has told me this adventure fifty times over, which has almost frightened me out of my wits. I have been awaked several times in the night, with the fear, least they should bring you by this frightful way. I conjure you, my dearest, to give the charge of you, to some one who will have more care about you than yourself. I am to write to one M. le Châtelaid at Moulins, who will shew you a great many little civilities ; he is a very worthy, and a very civil man, with a great deal of good sense and even piety. You will see M. de Gamoches there too, a lady of the house of Montmorin, and a lively pretty kind of woman. She was my constant companion both the times I was at Moulins, or at the Ladies Fouquet, without once leaving me, though I was there in all four or five days running. In short, she is the first friend I acquired at Moulins.

M. de Seignelai is gone post to Marseilles about some affair which concerns the marine, though we know what it is. Brisacier and his mother are still in the bastile. The mother has obtained leave to have a woman to wait on her ; but his Grace is obliged to be his own valet de chambre himself.

Your philosophical physician shoots from too great a distance to hit ; he thought me ill, when I am perfectly recovered ; and I can assure you, the advice they gave me here, was diametrically opposite to his. I shall end my letter to-morrow at Paris.

Thursday 15.

I am now in Paris. I lay at Saint Maur, whether I went from Livri. I saw M. de Rochefoucault, and we had a long chat together. Had *Quanto* pursued a different conduct from what she did the year she returned to Paris, she had not felt the disquietude in which she now is ; it had been a proof of her good sense had she so done : but how great is human weakness ! we are unwilling to husband our last remains of beauty ; a piece of œconomy, which, instead of enriching, is often the undoing of the person that makes use of it.

The *little good lady* is still in Flanders, this serves to stop some folks mouths. I have discovered that my reveries at Livri have a marvellous conformity with peoples conjectures here. I have not yet seen Madame des Coulanges; I shall not go there till I have sealed this pacquet. They tell me she is perfectly recovered, and that epigrams are beginning to be hatched as fast as ever. I shall present your compliments to her, and the same time deliver your letter for her husband.

They say Brisacier's crime is that of malversation in his office or function*, in causing the Queen to write to the King of Poland, to bring him to sollicit the King, to give her secretary, Brisacier, the brevet of a Duke. It must have been the Polish courier that brought this news. since they have granted commissaries to Brisacier, and you know what it is to abuse the seal and the bosom of a Queen of France. I fear the *Duke of BrisacierSKI* will be hanged.

I foresee my son will return, instead of going to the Meuse, where his evil genius seems to have sent him: he has got the rheumatism in his thigh, which will be an excellent thing to procure him leave of absence. If the fine weather continue any longer, I shall go for some small time to Livri. My house is quite ready for me, and every thing in order, which is a main point. Write to me, I beseech you, about your setting out, and I will write to you on Friday in return, about your method of travelling from Briere or from Orleans. You are in the right, when you say that Amonio will divert himself at Rome, with the adventure of the Reformation of Chelles, of which he was the author: I told you his uncle is Lord of the bed-chamber to the new Pope: you have writ me as much concerning this affair, as will furnish matter for a dozen epigrams. You are the most diverting creature this day living, with all that wisdom and gravity of yours: and would you take some care of my spleen, I verily believe I should be immortal; they tell me all my evils spring from thence. Think, my dearest, of coming to see me; I cannot calmly wait for the transporting pleasure of embracing you; no, my spirits are all in a flutter to go

* That of secretary of Queen's orders.

to meet you. Adieu, my dearest child, I shall write to you on Friday. I have not seen a soul as yet; you know how I love to collect scraps for your amusement. One thing there is, which I can never sufficiently acquaint you with, which is, the extreme love and regard I entertain for you.

LETTER CCCLXXXVIII.

To the same.

Paris, Friday, 16 October, 1676.

IN good faith, daughter, I never saw such a pack of ideots of children as my own; they hinder me from returning to Livri as I intended. I see you are going to burst out a laughing at this, and that you are far from being sorry I should be obliged to sit down contented at Livri on the fifteenth of October.

D'Hacqueville, Corbinelli, M. and Madame des Coulanges, will all of them agree with you in saying I ought never to leave them any more. It is notwithstanding true, that had it not been for you and my son, I had continued my solitary way of life, and that with pleasure: I enjoyed myself more in one day, than I can do here in a fortnight: I said my prayers, I read a great deal, I talked about the other world, and about the method of going there. The father Prior has more sense than I thought he had, though I found him to be a very honest worthy man. In short, I am now once more got into the hurly-burly.

I must go to wait on M. Colbert on the affair of your pension: d'Hacqueville will carry me to him, when that minister is returned to Paris, and so will save me a trip to Versailles: so much for my Lady, now something for my Lord. You must know then that his ill stars had sent him to the banks of the Meuse; when his good luck brought him the rheumatism in his thigh and one of his haunches, which is very painful to him, so that he cannot bear his own weight. He is now at Charleville, and entreats me to desire leave of absence for him: I must therefore wait on M. de Louvois, so that here's business on my hands. Had not I

good reasons, my pretty one, to complain of my children, and even to rail at them?

M. des Coulanges had writ you a very pretty letter, bespattered with verse in many places, in which he told you his uneasiness, and wonderful care about you, which they took care to acquaint Madame des Coulanges with in her illness: and that the Marchioness de la Trousse, who had staid at Berri, on the news of her being dangerously ill, was the only person that had liked to have died of fear, on learning the account of her resurrection *. This circumstance, though the sick person has already laughed at it, has however always offered itself to her imagination, accompanied with a certain black vapour, so that she has actually improved upon it: and at the same time her husband has taken up the letter, rumpled it like a child, and thrown it into the fire. We were quite astonished at what happened, and he has now writ another, which is much flatter than the paper on which it is written. Your's was most admirable, we considered it as a piece worthy to be preserved by way of model fit to study on such occasions.

M. de Valliere is dead; he had several operations performed upon him: and is, however, departed at last. Sister Louisa of the Mercy †, has caused a request to be presented to the King, praying that the government may be reserved for payment of his debts, without saying any thing of his nephews. The king has therefore granted her this government, and told her that were he a person of sanctity sufficient to visit so holy a Carmelite as she was, he would go in person to tell her how much he shares in her loss. Madam de S*** is returned from Flanders; I have seen her, and repaid her a visit, which she made me on my return from Brittanny. I thought her mighty handsome, excepting only the circumstance of the one

* The Marchioness de la Trousse was so jealous of the pretended attachment of her husband for Madame des Coulanges, that it was thought this piece of wit might safely be hazarded.

† Francoise-Louise de la Baume-le-Blanc, Dutchesse of Valliere, then a nun in the Carmelites, of the Rue Saint Jaques at Paris, was sister to John Francis de la Baume-le-Blanc, Governor and Grand Seneschal of the province of Bourbonnois who died 13 October, 1676.

tooth, which has a hideous effect in the fore part of her mouth ; her husband is in perfect health, and as gay as a lark. The *Grand Lady* has had a high éclaircissement with *Quanto*, and has shewn perfectly well, how little she was capable of supporting the thoughts of a new flame. 'Tis impossible to enjoy a greater degree of health than she now does, there may happen great changes before another day comes to an end : in a word, she is now at the highest pitch of happiness ; they have given her four hundred Louis d'ors for the dresses for Villiers Côterez, where they are to pass the St. Hubert holidays ; 'tis thought this party is broke off, and that there is nothing certain with regard to it, but the vast expence the ladies have been put to. She has been silly enough to dip deep with the silk mercer ; she had done better had she spent part of that sum in something else ; and especially since it is impossible to buy a new face ; and with respect to the old one, dress, you know, is but so much money and time thrown away. It is said, for certain, that Mademoiselle d'Elbeuf told his Highness, that Madame de Richelieu paid the Duke a compliment, on Madame's being brought to bed of a daughter ; this has occasioned whole swarms of smart sayings, repartees, goings and comings, and justification ; and all this not worth one farthing. I sent you a long discourse of father Bossu about the moon ; I think it was in the packet of the twenty-fifth that has miscarried, for which I am still heartily sorry. I long exceedingly to hear you speak about setting out ; I think your better way will be to proceed on to Orleans ; 'tis but one day's journey farther : you will there find Beaulieu, who will have a carriage ready for you ; and next morning, be assured, I will not fail to bring my coach to receive you : that of Orleans, will bring your people with all your luggage. Farewel, my dearest, think of the abominable road from Grignan to Montelimart. I am heartily sorry you have suffered so much from the importunities of your M. C_____, he is as black as a negro, and all that : I think I behold your despair ; it is impossible to be master of one foot of a loaded estate, without being plagued to death with a thousand of those impertinent visits.

LETTER CCCLXXXIX.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday, 21 October, 1676.

MY good daughter! is it possible you should imagine the world disapproves of your coming to see me, or that any creature living could be surprized, at your leaving M. de Grignan for so small a space of time in order to give me this desireable token of your regard for me?

I am sure it would be much more difficult to justify the contrary conduct, and it would puzzle your friends a great deal more, than it would do to apologize for the journey you are going to make. Be at ease, therefore, on that head, and be assured, that there cannot be a greater argument of your discretion and good sense, than such a testimonial of the love you bear me on this occasion. D'Hacqueville will tell you his sentiments of the matter, and as M. de Grignan must, by this time, have set out for the assembly, I think I begin to discover the dawning of your departure.

Madame de Verneuil will pass her Allhallow-tide at Lyons; she asked me, whether she might not expect to have the good fortune to meet you? I told her, I knew no reason to the contrary. Amonio has got to set out likewise; should you light of him, I am in no doubt but you will give him a handsome reception. I am now writing to M. de Grignan, and to his Grace the Archbishop, to solicit their interest and support on my side, against you. I am in no small perplexity; I have been to ask leave of absence for my son, who is ill of his rheumatism at Charleville; M. de Louvois told me, in a very obliging manner, that, if I desired it, he would ask the King for it; but at the same time, my son would, by such a request, not only very ill make his court to his Majesty, but would even run a very manifest risque of a refusal; that the little Villars, and many others, had actually experienced a denial; that his advice to him was to set about getting rid of it, as well as he could at Charleville; that had M. de Schomberg's

berg's certificate been taken of his case, when with the army, there had been no doubt of his getting leave to come home; but that a simple letter could have no chance of bringing it to pass. I have acquainted him of all this, and in the same instant receive in a letter, which without having received mine, he tells me he is to set out with a friend, who is likewise coming home, and that he will lie with me as to-morrow. I am in some apprehension for the consequences of this, which I will be sure to let you know. Father Bossu will be pleased to hear what you say of him. His *Art Poétique* * is much admired; you felt all its beauty without knowing to whom you were indebted for so much satisfaction. You will see here a translation of St. Augustine on *predestination and the perseverance of the righteous*. Our friends have come off in triumph in this work; 'tis truly the prettiest and boldest piece that ever was. You will see likewise, in another kind, the Rondeaux of Benserade; they are very different from each other in point of merit, and perhaps were the good to be separated from those that are not so, the former would be reduced to a very inconsiderable number; this printing is a strange affair: some folks send money to their husbands who are with the army; Saint Geran sends money home to his wife; he tells her that if she does not lay out the nine hundred livres he has sent her, in cloaths, he will not return home from his winter quarters, so that the little lady has dipt deep with the mercer, according to the intention of the donor. Madame de S*** has appeared in the company of her husband, so that here are two coifs, and one tooth fewer at court, so that one has not a word to say about any thing. She has had one of her fore teeth somewhat damaged; to tell you truth, it is entirely gone, and there is nothing left of it, but an empty space, for all the world like that of the great fat Abbé; this loss is prodigious, tho' she seems to think nothing at all of the matter. The journey of Villers to Terez is broke off; though it seems the King is good enough, to allow them to appear at court in their new dresses. But what is most astonishing, is the prodigious expence those

* That is, his discourse of epic poetry.

Ladies are at, without a souise but what his majesty furnishes to some particular persons amongst them. Me-thinks I behold you wandering over those meadows of yours, like some shepherdess without her swain, in a calm solitary condition, very different from the continual hurly-burly of these ladies : your mind enjoys a perfect repose and tranquillity, and all your thoughts are composed to peace, when compared to the everlasting hurry of these parts ; but what is a shepherdess when absent from her swain ? Your example is the best answer in the world to this question. Madame des Coulanges is still troubled with returns of her fever, which gives abundance of uneasiness, tho' it be almost the constant attendant in great diseases. Langlade is returned from Frêne, where he has been in a more dangerous way still, than Madame des Coulanges. I have been to visit him, and must own he is most charmingly lodged in that suburb. Madame de la Fayette is returned from St. Maur ; she has had three distinct accesses of the quartan ague, a circumstance with which, she says, she is quite charmed, as she will now have the satisfaction to be able to call her disorder by its proper name.

Five in the afternoon.

Know you where I am ? I defy you ever to guess, for the soul of you. I am come in the finest weather imaginable to dine with your sisters in the suburb, and I warrant you think I mean, the faubourg St. Jacques ; by no means, 'tis the faubourg St. Germain. I have here received your letter of the fourteenth. I am now in the finest house in all Paris, in Mademoiselle Reimond's chamber, who has caused a little most enchanting apartment to be built for her in it, as a benefactress to the house ; she is at liberty to go out when she has a mind, but will not, as she has got it into her head, not to stir till such time as she goes abroad for good and all, on her journey to paradise. I will bring you hither, both as a relique that belonged to my grandmother, but a person of cūriosity, that must be pleased to see a delightful country seat ; you will really be charmed with it. I am, therefore, going to answer your letter in this delightful place. And first of all, I must conjure you

to

to decide it in my favour, and to hesitate no longer about making that same journey which you promised me to make, and which really you do little less than owe me. I am not the only one who thinks you higgle too much with me about granting me that pleasure. Therefore set out, I say, set out; you must certainly have taken your measures from the time of M. de Grignan's departure. I embraced him, and intreat you to give him my letter; I recommend to you at the same time, that of his Grace the Archbishop, and cannot help saying I trust more to them than to yourself, for what I so earnestly importune.

I said as you said, with respect to the affair of the regulation; there is no sort of necessity for telling them, that when once they fall sick, they cannot then be at the assembly; this follows of course, and likewise to say, that if they are there, they will certainly be at the opening of it; that would be very silly indeed! In effect they will not be there at all, for 'tis not a place that one can suffer any one to be mump chance. I had corrected this article, without however changing the sense and meaning of it; but d'Hacqueville chose rather to have it sent away immediately, than to wait eight days longer, alledging that the Bishops, who were your friends, would find no difficulty in the matter, which those who were not, always would: the intendant, at least can never be supposed to fail in it; but really this affair vexes me. Do not you admire the eclat, and the mightiness which arises from the reflection of the beams of the sun? *s' mimiras, mi miran*: shall we never receive one single ray of it? I said yesterday to the son of an unfortunate person *, that if with his transcendent merit and courage, which even pierce through the gloom of his distress, he had the same good fortune with some in former times, a temple must have been erected to him. So far I say right, but then this very thing had spoiled him. You have great reason to say you could not possibly form to yourself an idea of Madame des Coulanges in her agony, or of M. des Coulanges in the depth of his afflictions. I could never have believed it, had I not

* The Count de Vaux.

been an eye witness of it: liveliness in death, and gaiety in the midst of the sharpest pangs are things altogether incredible. The poor soul had another fit yesterday; there is no escaping scot-free out of such distempers. When I reflect that after ten months are passed and gone, my hands are still swelled, I can hardly forbear laughing; for as to pain, that is all over, without so much as a shadow of it remaining. I shall warn Corbinelli to beware how he offers to reason with you, except it be according to all the rigour and strictness of the *forms*. For he grows as mad as a March hare, so that one is not safe of their life with him. He is now busy in writing Rondeaux on the recovery of Madame des Coulanges; I am to revise them, so that you may judge of the perfection of the composition. Adieu, my dear child, set out, I beseech you, and come away to me; be resolved for once, and give over those epilogues of yours about decency and all that; be assured that there's nothing in the affair of your journey that is inconsistent with, and 'tis not I alone who say it, every body is of the same opinion.

The Abbé de Pontcarré shewed me yesterday what you writ him about the cloak he gave away so rashly; 'tis really exceedingly diverting. The conduct of our Cardinal is, without all doubt, most admirable, accordingly the world does him great justice on that head, and he has no reason to be dissatisfied with the honour he has reaped from it.

LETTER CCCXC.

To the Same.

Lisri, Friday, 23 October, 1676.

HERE'S the second tome of the *Frater* for you. I sent him yesterday a coach at Boweger—, and came, but let this be said en paßant, with another coach and six to meet him here, where I was not over and above sure of his arrival so very precisely; chance, however, which is sometimes diverting enough, brought us all together at the end of the avenue: this circumstance of our exactness made us laugh. He went in, embraced, spoke of twenty different things at the same instant, asked each other questions, without either hearing

hearing or waiting for an answer. In short, this interview was accompanied with that sort of tumultuous joy, which commonly attends these first moments. In the mean time the gentleman halts, tires, boasts of a rheumatism in his thigh, when he is not in my company, for that it seems throws him into a sort of confusion; and as we have remarked of others, smothers one half of his complaints. I dreamt, I was persuaded, and told openly that I had a blue thigh; it was that which ailed the most, I therefore allowed him to say he had a blue thigh, provided he would allow himself to have a green head likewise. But have a care of telling this to Montgobert, she would not fail to make a bad use of it against the Baron this winter, who is preparing on his side to plague her. She writes both to him and me the most diverting things imaginable: yet we can see, thro' all this good humour, that she is ill, which we are really very sorry for. My son will therefore remain here a few days, till such times as the attestations, necessary for procuring him his leave of absence, arrive from Charleville, or till the troops that marched for the Meuse, are returned, as they say they will; because, it seems, the Duke of Zell, who threw us into this panic, is retired, and possibly is as much, or more afraid than we are. With respect to our Abbey, they wish heartily I were forced to leave them, in order to go to meet you, for it seems there's no such thing as being happy without you. Surely you must be determined by this time, or you never will; at least you can be in no manner of doubt, how earnestly I desire it. I fancy M. de Grignan is by this time gone to the assembly; therefore, by rights, you ought to be on your journey: were this the case, I should be less sorry than I am for the loss of this letter, at least less so, than for the loss of that great paquet of the twenty-fifth, for which I am still heartily vexed. If you find my hand somewhat tottering, I desire you would be under no apprehensions on that account, it is only because my fingers are numbed with the cold. Adieu, my dearest, I resign the pen to *the lame gentleman*. 'Twas said the other day, an advertisement had been published, to know what had become of M. de Luxembourg's army,

and

and when he set out ; it is pretended the great Conde should have said ; *a fine command truly ! and a long !* which is to last as long as till the month of July ! They say too, that M. de Luxembourg * has made a better funeral panegyric on M. de Turenne than even M. de Tulle, and that the Cardinal de Bouillon will give him an abbey. Now we are talking of the Cardinal, your expression, *free from sacrilege in the conclave, or even a peccadillo on the road,* is wonderfully fine.

M. de Sévigné continues.

I am now settled in this place, almost as well as you could wish. I have a blue thigh, 'tis true ; but I can by no means agree to the story of the green head. I should be very glad, however, to make an exchange of the blueness of my thigh for a little verdure in the head ; I am sure I should walk a great deal better and more cleverly. I have received your letter, my dear little sister, and thank you for all your care and solicitude about me. I fancy, if I am not mistaken, we shall be very happy together this winter : yet for all that, you remember how I told you, I should never forget your heart, nor your interested mind ; saving this circumstance only, I shall have a tolerable good opinion of you, in spite of all your timidity and faint-heartedness, about which I have heard abundance of nonsense, I will scold you for that at a more convenient time : do but only come and see my dear good mamma, who is wondrous well, and as handsome as an angel. If you say your coming is therefore, in no sort necessary for the recovery of her health, I would have you to know it is very much so for the preservation of it ; which comes to much the same thing.—*Come Queen of the supreme abodes, come, gracious Cybele, come.* You will, indeed, pass well enough with us, for one descended from the skies ; but even should you come without any equipage, you will not for all that, think you have dropped from the clouds ; our dear pretty mamma, has provided against every adventure. Adieu,

* Marshal Luxembourg experienced in those days what happens to most great men. He was at first exposed to the arrows of envy and ill-nature, till at length both were silenced by his victories, and gave place to panegyrics and universal admiration.

dear

dear pretty little sister, my compliments and respects to M. de Grignan a thousand and a thousand times.

Madame de Sévigné resumes.

I am a fool, that's clear. I have committed a sin against geography: you don't come by Moulins at all, the litter does not go that way. I ask your pardon for this impertinence: I know you have been chiding me, and laughing at me at the same time.

LETTER CCCXCI.

To the Same.

Livry, Wednesday, 28 October, 1676.

IT is impossible for creature to be more surprised than I am, to hear by you that the match of M. de la Garde is broke off? O good God! Did not you hear the scream I gave? The whole forest has repeated it, and I find myself happy in being in a place where I have no witness to my transport besides my lady Echo. When I get to town, I can well enough put on the air and mien of a friend, and that without any kind of hardship. I approved of this match on account of the great regard I have for him; and for the same reason, I think I ought to change my thoughts of it, as he has done. Would to God he would think of returning with you; he would be the very person I could wish, of all others, to be your conductor.

I am astonished the assembly should be not yet opened. M. de Pomponne was of opinion, it must happen on the fifteenth of this month. So then you are to pass the holidays at Grignan; but when these are over, will not you then, daughter, think of coming away? But I have harped so long on this thing, and you are so sensible of what would give me pleasure, that I shall say no more about it. The *frater* is still here, waiting the attestations which are to procure him his leave of absence. He halts, takes medicines, and though we are threatened with all the severity of the ancient discipline, we yet live content in hopes we shall not be hanged. We chat and read; M. Gossip, who thinks I stay here purely out of love to him, excuses himself on account of the rains,

rains, and omits nothing which he thinks may divert me; in which, to tell truth, he succeeds to a miracle.

M. de Sévigné continues.

The daughter of my Lord *Alcantor* then refuses to marry my Lord *Sganarelle*, who is no more than five or six and fifty *: I am very sorry for it, every thing was agreed upon, and all the expence defrayed. I imagine the difficulty of consummating, was the chief obstacle to it; the Chevalier *de la Gloire* † will no longer be uneasy about it, that's one comfort. My mother stays here purely out of regard for me, who am a poor criminal that is threatened every day of my life with the bastile, or else with being cashiered. I am in hopes, however, every thing will be quieted by the sudden return of the troops. My present condition were enough to bring this to pass; but this, it seems, is out of fashion. I do what I can to console my mother, both in regard to the bad weather, and for her leaving Paris; but she refuses to hear me when I mention this point. She is always reminding me of the care I took of her in her illness, and as far as I am able to guess from her discourse, she is vexed my rheumatism is not universal, and that I have not a continued fever, that she might have an opportunity of shewing her great tenderness for me, and all the extent of her gratitude. It would please her exceedingly, could she once see me reduced to a necessity of confession; but unluckily, it is not likely to happen this time, so she must rest satisfied with seeing me limp about, as M. de Rochefoucault was wont to do in days of yore, tho' he now walks as clever as can be. We are in hopes we shall see you soon, so do not deceive us, and let's have no more trifling; they say you are much given to this sin, on the present head. Farewel, dear pretty little sister, I embrace you with all the sincerity and cordiality imaginable.

* Vid. Moliere's marriage force, scene 2d.

† The Chevalier de Grignan.

LETTER CCCXCI.

To the Same.

Livri, Friday, 30 October, 1676.

I Receive with the highest sense of the tenderness of your regard for me, my dear child, what you tell me, with a view to strengthen me against the ills of life, to which, I own, I cannot easily, or without a very sensible reluctance, submit: nothing can possibly be better judged, or more worthy of the character of a christian. I can see your constant care is to preserve my spleen in good order, and perhaps the calm precepts of wisdom which you teach me, are at least equal to any satisfaction I could have received from pleasures of a more joyous nature. I will, however, make an end of this lecture, not that I would have you by any means to imagine, I could not expatiate a great while longer upon it, did I but say half of what I think, but because I am sensible the subject is in no respect proper to commit to an epistle.

They tell us wonders of the good qualities of the new Pope, all the credit of which methinks must redound to our friend the Cardinal de Retz. As for M. de Paris, the wonders they say of him are of a very opposite nature: he has got the better of the commissaries, who themselves were more delicate in point of conscience than he, in establishing this point, that it is lawful for his majesty to appoint the Abbesses of several nunneries, and in a more particular manner to appoint those of the order of Cordelieres, and which is already begun to be put in practice, to the great scandal and offence of every body. The four commissaries who have signed the opposite resolution are these; Pussort, Boncherat, Pommerieuil, and Fieubet. They have taken six of the nuns of Chelles, to be Abbesses in different places: la d'Oradour, it seems, is none of the number, which mortifies her prodigiously, as no one can possibly be possessed with the spirit and turn of the abbey politics, which is as turbulent and stormy as others.

I have ever been exceedingly vexed to think of the short stay M. de Grignan has made at his castle; where neither

neither his expence nor his hurry have known the smallest intermission. I think a government of Provence too subject to commotions, and the presence of its governors, of course so exceeding necessary, that it frights me so much as to think of his obtaining, or even asking leave of absence. But now I think on it, it is high time to talk to you about your setting out. You tell me, it depends wholly on God and myself; with respect to my good wishes and my positiveness, I think you can hardly entertain the smallest suspicion, so that the affair, on the contrary, rests wholly between providence and you; therefore, daughter, let me beseech you, not to oppose his designs, but frankly follow the dictates of your heart, and even of your reason, for I think I may fairly submit my cause to any impartial tribunal. Your reproaches sting me to the very soul; which I think you will easily grant, when I tell you, that, if need be, I will sacrifice my dearest hopes to them. You are capable of yielding to reason, and what is more, you have an undoubted love for me, and as you are certainly at least as intimately acquainted with your own heart and wishes, as well as what is proper for you, or the contrary, as I can be, I leave it to yourself to determine in the last report, and I am certain M. de Grignan and the Archbishop will go into any thing you shall propose to them. Adieu, my dearest, I cannot tell at present, how I could, with any sort of complacency for myself, mention any other topic; we are still in this rest of ours: we read Saint Augustine, and are become entire converts with regard to the points of predestination and perseverance.

M. de Sévigné continues.

I cannot allow us to be altogether converted yet, and I'll tell you why: both of us are of opinion, that the arguments of the Semipelagians are extremely solid, and full of good sense, whilst those of Saint Paul and Saint Augustine, seem so many fine spun cobwebs, more worthy of the Abbe Tétu, than of those Doctors. We could have put up with the thing called religion tolerably well, had those two Saints been forbid the use of pen and paper. So you see we are far from being got over this stumbling-block. Farewel, my pretty little sister,

sister, make haste and come to us; I shall be heartily glad to see you, if I am not hanged whilst you are on the way.

LETTER CCCXCIII.

To the same.

Livri, Wednesday, 4 November, 1676.

Nothing can be truer than the proverb, which says, that liberty is destroyed by uncertainty. Were you under any sort of restraint, you would have determined what to do long before now, and not been like Mahomer's tomb, suspended between heaven and earth; one of the load-stones would certainly by this, have got the better of the other. You would not any longer be in a state of force and necessity. The scream you made in passing the Durance, Ah, mother! mother! would either be heard from the castle of Grignan; or at least that which counselled you to quit that place, would not give you any uneasiness at Briare: for which reason I maintain, that nothing can be more opposite in its nature to liberty, than indifference, and the want of a fixed resolution. Can it be possible that the sage la Garde, who has, it seems, resumed all his wonted wisdom, is it possible such a philosopher should have likewise lost his free-will; is he incapable of advising you? can he be at a loss to decide in this important point? As for me, there is none of the councils, let them be ever so universal, that has ever decided in a more dogmatical manner than I have done. But how is it that la Garde, who is coming to Paris himself, cannot contrive to order it so, as that his journey may fall out at the same time with yours? If you do come, 'tis no bad thought to come by the way of Sully, the little Dutchess would certainly convey you as far as Nemours; at least you would find some acquaintances or other, both then and next day, so that you would be conducted from friend to friend, till you found yourself in your chamber. You would have met with a better reception last time, but your letter came so late, that you popped on every body all on the sudden, and had near missed myself,

self, which had been really diverting enough; but we'll contrive to keep clear of this scrape for the future. I cannot help praising the Chevalier*, who arrived in Paris on Friday evening, and dined here on Saturday last; don't you think it was vastly pretty of him. I was charmed to see him, and I assure you we spoke with great freedom of yours simples. I am now going to take a trip to Paris. I must see M. de Louvois on your brother's affair, who is here without any leave of absence, which troubles me not a little. I want to speak with M. Colbert likewise, about the affair of your pension: these two tiny visits are all I have to make. I am in thoughts of going to Versailles, but will acquaint you whether I do so or no. In the mean time we have the finest weather imaginable here, the country has as yet put on none of its horrors, and St. Hubert has favoured the hunter extremely. We are still employed in reading Saint Augustine, which is vastly entertaining: there is something so great and noble in his way of thinking, that all the mischief that weak minds can possibly receive by his doctrine, is infinitely short of the good which others reap from the perusal of them. You will be apt to think, I give myself the airs of the learned ladies, but when you see in what a familiar manner this is laid open to me, you will cease your wonder at my capacity. You tell me, that if you loved me not a great deal more than you say, you would not love me at all: I am strangely tempted to answer you in kind, even if I should risque the saying an unkind or an uncivil thing; but now I think on't, I won't; for I am fully persuaded you love me, and the Almighty knows, much better than it is possible for you to do, what a strong affection I entertain for you. I am glad to hear Pauline is like me, she'll serve to put you in mind of me; Ah, mother! tell me, truly, mamma, was there not much need of something of this sort?

M. de Sévigné continues.

When I think of M. de la Garde's being with you, at the time of your receiving your letter, I tremble lest he should spy over your shoulder the nonsense I wrote you † some days ago. This makes me mad, so that I

* De Grignan. † See the letter of the 28th October, pag. 180.
cannot

cannot help crying out, Ah, sister! sister! were I as much at my liberty as you are, I should not have heard some folks call out, *Ab, mamma! mamma!* It should not be long before I should be in Provence. I cannot for my soul conceive, what it is that makes you hesitate: you give whole years to the Grignans, and to the whole family of the Grignans: after this behaviour, what law can be so cruel, as to hinder you from giving the poor pittance of four months to your own family? never was law of knighthood, by which the redoubted Knight Sancho Pancho swore by, half so severe; and if Don Quixote had a writer of equal gravity with M. de la Garde to celebrate his exploits, he would never have made any bones of suffering to change his equipage with the Knight of the Mambrino's Helmet. Lay hold, therefore, I say, of the opportunity of M. de la Garde, since he is now actually with you, settle the affair of your journey in concert, and know, that you owe some duty elsewhere, besides what you owe at the castle of Grignan. We have no sort of doubt of your heart, but this alone will not always do; we must have ocular proof, some outward visible sign of its reality. Divide your favours, therefore, between both hemispheres, like the sun, which enlightens and fructifies the world with his beneficent rays. Is not this a pretty way of shewing you reasons why you ought not to stay where you are? Farewel, my pretty little sister, my thigh is blue still, and I much fear will continue so, at least for this winter.

LETTER CCCXCIV.

To the Same.

Livri, Friday, 6 November, 1676.

SURE there never was an handsomer letter than your last; I had some thoughts of sending it back, that you might have the pleasure of reading it. I could not help wondering for the life of me, whilst I read it, how it was possible any one should wish, they might never see any more of them. You see what an affront I put on your epistles, methinks you behave in a much gentler manner with regard to mine.

This

This same Reinond is certainly, hem! hem! with that head dress you know very well; she was dressed in this wise, as you very well say, that she might seem qualified to hear the music of the blessed above; and our sisters were tricked out in the same manner, out of an itch of getting an estate of seven thousand livres, with a pension of a thousand, by which she is enabled* to go abroad when she likes, and she likes it very often. We have never had any such ware before, but the beauty of our house causes to overlook every thing, for my own part, I am quite transported with the notion of it: for my opinion both her apartments and her voice are divine, hem, hem. The dates you mention in speaking of Madame de Soubise, are, thank God, amongst those which have quite escaped my memoirs. There must certainly have happened some extraordinary piece of incivility at these holidays at Versailles. You are very diverting in what you say of my friend's † illness, and at the same time, it is every tittle of it true. The quartan ague of our friend of the suburbs ‡, is happily at an end. I have sent your letter to the Chevalier, without the least apprehension of reproof §. I love him from my soul; and as for my piganiny, I wish to God I could hug him to my bosom; I got some such notion in my head, and think I shall one day or other see all these little gentry. I cannot, for the soul of me, form any sort of notion of that, which is but eight months old; pray is she still likely to live a century? I fancy the gentlemen that fought it out so stoutly in the streets, are in a fair way to live every whit as long. It would really be a very pretty, a very just kind of punishment, for a rencontre in the street in the heat of summer. Adieu, my dear lovely one, I shall close this in the good city.

Friday at Paris.

So here am I. I have been dining here at my good lady Bagno's, where I found Madame des Coulanges in this all charming chamber, radiant with the sun's golden

* It seems Mad. de Sevigne makes a kind of recantation in this place. † Madame des Coulanges. ‡ Mad. de la Fayette.
§ De Grignan.

rays,

rays, where I have often seen you, who might justly rival him in his meridian glory. This poor recovering lady made me a most hearty welcome, and is now going to write you two lines; it is possibly, for ought I know, something from the other world, which I am sure you will listen to with open ears. She has been giving me an account of what they call transparents. Pray, by the by, have you ever heard of these same transparents? Why it is an entire suit of the finest gold and azure brocades that can be seen, over which is a black transparent robe, either of the fine English lace, or such as those winter laces which you have seen: this is the transparent, which is, you see, a black suit, or a suit of gold and azure, at pleasure, according to the fancy of the wearer. This is all the mode at present. This was the dress wore at the ball on St. Hubert's day, which lasted a whole half hour, for nobody would dance. The King shoved Madame d'Heudicourt into the middle of the room by main force, which she complied with; but at length the battle stopped for want of soldiers. The fine boddices allotted for Villers-Cotterez, serve to wash out of an evening, and were wore on St. Hubert's day. His Highness the Prince writ the ladies at Chantilli, that their transparents would be fifty times handsomer, if they would but think of wearing them (a crû) which I very much question. The Grancei's and the Monaco's did not share in those pleasures because the latter is idle, and as for the mother of the Angels she has been at death's door. It is said the Marchioness de la Ferte has been in labour there, ever since Sunday.

M. de Langlée has made Madame de Montespan a present of a robe of cloth of gold, on a gold ground, bordered, and so besmeared, and tricked out with gold, that it makes the finest golden stuff ever imagined by the wit of man. It was contrived by the fairies; no living wight could ever have conceived any such finery. The manner of presenting it was equally mysterious. Madame de Montespan's mantua-maker carried her home the suit she had bespoke, having made the waste out of all measure on purpose; you need not be told what a grumbling and calling of names there was on

this

this occasion: says the mantua-maker, shaking, and almost dead with fear, will your Ladyship, as the time presfles,—will your Ladyship be please to try, whether this other suit might not be to your liking, instead of a better. The suit, in short, is brought forth: Heavens, cried the Lady, in a transport of joy, what a fine thing is here! What a delightful stuff! Pray whence had you it, or has it not dropt from the skies? For sure no mortal weaver could have performed such a piece of work. In a word, it is tried on, fits to a hair, and that hair too. In comes the King: Says the mantua-maker, please your ladyship, it was made for you. It was immediately concluded it must be some present; the question was, who was the giver? Why Langlée, says the King; it must be he, to be sure, says Madame Montespan, nobody besides myself could have imagined a present so beautifully magnificent. Every body cries out, Langlée, Langlée; it must be Langlée, Langlée, no doubt on't. Heaven! who repeats the pleasing sound, and says Langlée? To what can I say, to be in the fashion, but tell you it was Langlée.

Madame des Coulanges continues.

I am glad I did not die, Madame, since you are to return here this winter. I am now at your house; I can no longer endure the sight of the chamber and bed where I lay at death's door. Why do not you come and make your appearance like the rest, in your transparent. You will be very glad, no doubt, to save your brocade, and I could swear there is no person more likely to take the advice of his Highness about it, than you. Pray how do you like this fashion? You are the first person in the world I have writ to with my own hand: there is something between us, though hang me if I know well what. The Abbé Têtu is not as yet in winter quarters. Adieu, Madame, I should be heartily glad you would think of returning, upon my word and honour.

Madame de Sévigné.

Here's style for a dead woman with a witness. We laughed heartily at what you said of her, and M. de la Garde, when you compared the extremity from which they have recovered: this proves, that wisdom, like youth,

youth, returns to us from a great distance. I look for d'Hacqueville and the Chevalier de Grignan every moment, to form my council of war, and to inform me of the destiny of the poor Baron, whom I left at Livri in a very maimed, forlorn condition. Adieu, my dear, if you have come to the determination which we wish, I hope my letter will find you on your journey.

LETTER CCCXCV.

To the Same.

Livri, Wednesday, 11 November 1676.

THIS letter, I fancy, will hardly find you at Grignan; though I am still at a loss to imagine what resolution you have come to, or to guess what it is you can possibly have to repent of. You tell us repentance will be the assured attendant on your resolution: methinks your having resolved on coming by way of Lyons, can in no wise occasion you the least regret; since, by so doing, you will give a sensible pleasure to every one; and, at the same time, acquit yourself at once of your promise and obligation. As for me, I put my confidence in M. de Grignan, and am entirely convinced, it is to him alone I shall stand indebted for what I wish for with so much ardour.

I returned to this place on Monday. My son waits till the troops have taken some certain measures: I was advised against soliciting his leave of absence, so that he leads, in some degree, the life of a monk in this abbey of mine. He is glad I keep him company, and tells me, the strongest proof he can give of his friendship for me, is the great desire he has to drive me out to go to meet you.

Monsieur de Sévigne continues.

'Tis this reason alone, that could have rendered my mother's absence in any degree bearable. You will very soon know in person the pleasure of seeing her after some short absence. I am still in the first transports of this ecstasy: but when the affair is about going to meet the divinity of Provence, whose charms have been so long hid from our eyes, every obstacle must fly before such an object.

This

This sacred right breaks each inferior tye.

I am in hopes too, this exile of mine will be of no long continuance. There is hardly so much as a doubt of the return of the troops: and it is not unlikely I may happen to arrive in Paris on the same day with you. Adieu, my adorable little sister, whom I love with all the tenderness I am capable of.

Madame de Sévigné proceeds.

Should it happen that you are not as yet set out, it is I who ought in reason to repent of my civilities towards you. I shall, in this case, be fully persuaded, that one ought never to remit the payment of a bill of exchange. Let me die if I have not thought of this a thousand times over. The *worthy* is transported with your very genteel compliments. Farewel, my dearest, I know of no sort of news. *Quanto* danced at the last ball all sorts of dances, as if he had been but twenty, and as exact as if he had been just come from school. Every body are of opinion——. In short, adieu, I am perfectly well, think no more about my health.

LETTER CCCXCVI.

To the same.

Livri, Friday, 13 November, 1676.

At length I see you are got to Lambesc, and in the very instant I was looking out for you, you are on the road towards the Durance: one must be as great a philosopher as yourself, to be able to put up with such a behaviour as this. You must judge very ill of the friendship I have for you, should you omit the smallest of the precautions you mention in your letter, in order to alleviate what I suffer on this occasion: in the interim it lies wholly at your door, that I no longer believe in your promises; after I have so fully paid all the duty that could be expected from you in Provence. I hope you will, at the long run, think of what you owe to me. But I cannot help wondering at the prodigious connection there, between my private affairs, and those of the public: surely the overplus of what is wanted at your assembly, must fall to my share. As soon as I was informed of it, it pierced me to the heart;

and

and as I know you sufficiently, I immediately began to see you was loth to leave M. de Grignan. It is certainly, as you very rightly say, one of the most important events that can possibly happen in any province; you will, no doubt, be extremely useful to him; and I cannot help being of opinion, that nothing can be more becoming or worthy of you than such a conduct. I will assure you, I much fear this consultation, when I reflect on the pains M. de Grignan has been at, to bring them to five thousand livres. I am wholly at a loss to conceive how he will be able to double the dose. I have always in my head the notion of a pressure, which is screwed so hard, till at last the rope gives way. I beseech you to give me the detail of the whole matter; I am more taken up with the affairs of Lambesc, than with those of Saint Germain; I would prefer you should inform me of this, even at the expence of going without any direct answer to my letters. Be sure too, not to forget the account of the adventures you promised me you would tell me, I love you should have something to acquaint me of. You did well to leave your baggage at Grignan; I wish for all that you would return to the affair of your journey; you have made a beginning of it in such manner, that I should much sooner look for you at Rome than at Paris. I am going to take a trip to the good city, in order to proceed with my companions of t'other day for St. Germain, on the business of your pension, after which I shall hide myself again in this forest with poor *frater*; his whole employment is to find amusement for me, and I am persuaded he thinks me the best companion in the world. I resign the pen to him, and embrace you with the most unfeigned tenderness.

M. de Sevigne continues.

It is true, I acknowledge it, that I am really very glad to be here with my mother, and that I am even not a little vexed when she goes away from me. I could have been well enough satisfied to have parted with her, had she left me to go to meet you; but I cannot so well digest her leaving me about the affair of your pension, though I grant you it is a thing not altogether so despicable. My personal zeal for the King's service,

and the exactness that must be observed in it, leaves me in no manner of doubt about what hinders your departure; I hold them wholly worthy of you: your character would make a complete stage character, it never varies from the unities, and supports itself, throughout to the very last scene of the drama. This extraordinary perfection makes me hope you will preserve the same uniformity in your behaviour with regard to me; I wish it, as I really love you, that is with all my soul: Is not this enough, think you, to deserve your regard? You never fail to attack me on a certain point, so as to give me to understand what a mighty superiority you have over me: but can you think, that a man, who was capable of pleasing Mademoiselle *Agara*, and the Mademoiselle of five hours, should be unworthy to be your brother. Do you remember what a pair of eyes she rolled? It is true, I was somewhat disposed to take a nap of an evening; but do not you do so in a morning? But you are entirely ignorant of the nature of a sciatica, 'tis a delightful thing of nights, though in the day time it is far from having the same pretensions. Adieu, pretty little charming sister, I will give you time to be present at the Salvo that is to be fixed over me. I beseech you to come to us quickly, were it only to save my mother the trouble of writing to you so often: as for my part, I do but talk to her in vain, 'tis only so much eloquence thrown away.

LETTER CCCXCVII.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday, 17 November, 1676.

AH, my daughter, the word indifference should not be used, in speaking of any of the sentiments of my heart for you. You say it appears in one of my letters, I have good witness as well as you, of the ardour with which I wish to see you: but in the midst of this real tenderness, I had fortitude enough to give you your liberty, being persuaded, that if you had it in your power to come, that would make you hasten your departure, rather than detain you; and that in case you could not, you would sooner take the suitable resolutions,

resolutions, than come hither with reproaches and ill humour. This is what made me write five or six lines which pierced my heart with grief ; but if it be true, as I believe it is, that your affairs will not suffer by it, and if you are willing to let me enjoy the pleasure of seeing you again ; believe, once for all, without the least doubt or scruple, that there is nothing in the world I wish for more : and after giving to Mons. de Grignan this proof of friendship, which I approve upon so extraordinary occasion as this, take a resolution to come directly, without waiting for him : a hundred accidents may happen to detain him. It would not be honourable for him to desire to be dismissed, if the King should set out in the month of March ; perhaps too a cessation of arms may be made, as the Pope requires : but finally, in the midst of all these uncertainties, form a resolution, and come willingly, and with a good grace, to communicate to me the most lively joy which I am capable of feeling in this world. I am convinced that Mons. de Grignan will consent to it with all his heart ; he writes to me with such an air of sincerity, that I cannot have the least doubt of it. A longer uncertainty would be prejudicial to that health which you love so much ; so that I yield myself up entirely to my former hope, and am fully persuaded that you will come according to your promise.

I have been here since Sunday. I intended to go to St. Germain to speak to M. Colbert about your pension ; I went thither in very good company ; M. de St. Geran, M. d'Hacqueville, and others, consoled me beforehand for the cold reception which I expected. So I spoke to him about this pension ; I touched upon your constant occupation and zeal for the service of the King ; I touched likewise upon the excessive expences which persons in your station are obliged to be at, and which would not allow of your neglecting any thing in order to support them ; I added, that it gave the Abbé Grignan, and myself, some concern, to importune him about such an affair : all this was concise and proper enough ; but I shall not have much trouble to tell you his answer. Madam, says he, I will take care about it, and so conducts me to the door, and there's an end of my negotiation.

ation. I went to dine at M. de Pomponne's; the ladies were not there; I did the honours of the house to seven or eight persons, and returned without seeing any body: they would have spoken to me of my son and daughter, and what answer could I have made.

This is the history of my expedition, and I am very much afraid it will prove of no manner of service to you. I hope, however, to succeed in time, but 'tis too certain that no body has hitherto been paid. If you employed one of your domesticks in an affair of importance, and if at the same time, he should beg you to pay him a pistole due to him, would you hesitate to do it? But that is not the mode at court. I am advised by every body not to desire to have my son dismissed, and to wait the result of affairs in Germany; but that is a little tedious; and after I have passed a few days more at Livri, I shall return to Paris, provided I may have any hopes of seeing you there; for if it were not for that, I assure you I should prefer Livri to the capital.

Gaming is no longer so universal as it was at Versailles. Every thing is at St. Germain upon the same footing as formerly. M. de Pomponne informs me, that our Cardinal makes a great noise at Rome; there hardly comes a letter from thence, that is not full of his praises; they would gladly have detained him there to assist the Pope with his advice; he has acquired additional reputation in his last voyage. He passed through Grenoble in order to visit his niece; I don't mean his beloved niece; 'tis a great misfortune to have no hopes of ever seeing him again; I must own that this is one of the considerations that make me melancholy. Peace is made in Poland, but in a manner somewhat romantic. The hero* at the head of fifteen hundred men, though surrounded by two hundred thousand, forced them, sword in hand, to sign the treaty. He had posted himself so advantageously, that nothing of the kind was ever seen since the time of Calprenede†; this is the best news the King could possibly receive, on account of the great number of enemies which the King of Poland, and the Grand Signior will take off of our hands. The

* John Sobieski, King of Poland.

† The author of several celebrated romances.

M—— sent us word, that he had a great deal of trouble in concluding this peace ; I suppose his trouble was much the same as when this brave King was elected *. Dangeau thought proper to make presents as well as Langlée : he beggar'd the farm-yard of Clugni ; he got together the most amorous turtles, to the value of two thousand crowns, all the fattest sows he could meet with, all the cows with the biggest udders, the sheep with the best fleeces, and the finest goslings ; and yesterday caused the whole tribe to pass in review, like that of Jacob in your cabinet at Grignan.

Your letter of the 10th of this month came to hand ; I am very well pleased with the good resolution you have taken, it will be approved of by every body, and you can hardly conceive the joy that it gives me. It was in the vexation which your uncertainties occasioned me, that I was going to tell you, that far from loving me as much as you said, you loved me a great deal less, because you declined coming to see me ; thus have I explained the rudeness I was guilty of : but I now change my language, at the same time that I change my peevish humour for real joy. I believe your joy was not inconsiderable at seeing the Cardinal de Bouillon ; you had doubtless a great deal to say to each other. What you tell me with regard to Cardinal de Retz, agrees very well with all you have said concerning him : I don't doubt but you feel as much inquietude as I do myself, at the thoughts of seeing him no more. I am very well pleased with your guides, take care to apprize me of every step you take. I am very glad to hear, that the assembly was opened in a proper manner, and that the speech made upon the occasion was both elegant, and well delivered. I shall go to-morrow to Livri, to pass four or five hours with your brother : and then I shall come back to this place, having nothing more to think of but your return, and whatever relates to it.

* This election happened on the 10th of May, 1674.

LETTER CCCXCVIII.

To the Same.

Livri, Friday, 20 November, 1676.

A HAPPY event never comes single. I had received your letter of the 10th, which pleased me highly; I answered it directly, and about an hour after received a note from the Chevalier de Grignan, who wrote me word from St. Germain, that the enemies of the Baron were retiring, and instead of going, without delay, to meet his company, he would be at liberty to return in five or six days; and that, in all probability*, la Fare would be the dove that was to bring the olive bough. He, at the same time, gave me to understand, that your pension would shortly be paid. This intelligence greatly raised my spirits, and I returned yesterday to meet my son, who at least went halves with me in my joy. We shall not make any considerable stay in this place; I shall now employ myself entirely in preparing to receive you well, and to go to meet you. I shew a thousand marks of friendship to your two guides; they are the worthiest people in the world. I shall see the Cardinal of Bouillon as soon as ever he arrives. I believe Verneuil will compose the life of the hero very well; what you say of the conclave is very extraordinary: but I can't easily conceive how the Cardinal should pass near enough to you to visit you, and should neglect it notwithstanding. He discovered so much friendship for you, that it is difficult to imagine, he should have a stronger desire to see his niece of Sault, than his dear niece: in fine, he did not think proper to visit you. I hope you may be easier than I am myself at the thoughts of never seeing him again; I was born to suffer by the absence of friends. People have conceived great hopes of a peace, and I don't doubt but you will be able to procure M. de Grignan leave to retire, if things don't take a new turn. Madame de Vins

* Mons. de la Fare was sub-lieutenant of the company of Dauphin's Gend'armes, in which Mons. de Sévigné was Ensign; he bought the commission of the Marquis de la Fare in June, 1677.

passed

passed a whole day with me; she seems to me to have a great affection, for you, and to have an ardent desire to enjoy your company, Mons. de Sévigné. I could not help thinking, that you would be touched by the comparison of the sun, and that it might have such an effect as to make you hasten your journey, to compleat the resemblance between you and that luminary. I have good hopes that none of us will be hanged, our enemies are going, and my liberty approaches of consequence. With regard to Mons. de Grignan, I understand that the people of Provence are more tractable than I thought them, so that our family will not suffer any disgrace this time. You have seen the little Cardinal, I am sorry the great one was not there too, such an interview which might properly have been called a last adieu, would have given you pleasure, notwithstanding the melancholy reflections which must attend it. Adieu, my charming sister, adieu; my son, you would do well to come and warm us; for at present the sun acquits himself but ill of his duty, however we must not complain of him.

LETTER CCCXCIX.

To the Same.

Livri, Wednesday, 25 November, 1676.

WHILST I walk in this avenue, I see a courier arrive. Who should it be? 'Tis Pomier himself; this indeed is admirable. And when will my daughter come? Madam she should be upon her journey already. Come then, let me embrace you. Now I think of it, Madam, is the gift of your assembly granted? At what sum? At eight hundred thousand livres. This is all very well; our press is strong enough, we have nothing to fear, we need only pull the cord, there's no danger of its breaking. In fine, I open your letter, and am ravished with the contents. I easily discover the two characters, and perceive that you are in earnest preparing for your departure. I say nothing of the perfect joy which this gives me. To-morrow I set out for Paris with my son; he is no longer in any danger. I wrote a line to Mons. de Pomponne, in order to recom-

mend our courier to him. You have fine weather for your journey, but I am apprehensive of the frost. I will send you a coach wherever you think proper. I am just going to send away Pomier, that he may go this evening to Versailles, I mean to St. Germain. I blunder in every thing, I am so hurried. I am at present perfectly well in health, and give my love to you a thousand times.

LETTER CCCC.

To the Same.

Paris, Friday, 27 November, 1676.

MY dear and amiable daughter, I direct this letter to you at Valence; such a change gives me the highest satisfaction. I hope you have with caution passed the dangerous banks of the Rhone, and that you will write to me, in order to let me know where to send you a coach; if you would have it at Briare, it is what I entirely approve of, and I'll take care to send it, exactly when you shall have occasion for it. I returned yesterday from Livri, and brought your brother with me, because la Fare is arrived, and the whole business concluded. Upon my arrival, I saw the Chevalier de Grignan, M. d'Hacqueville, Madame de Vins, and M. de la Trousse: your return was the chief subject of our conversation. I wrote you word, that I had seen Pomier at Livri, and that I sent him to St. Germain with a note for M. de Pomponne. He is just returned, he has presented your letters to M. de Pomponne, who received them very graciously; the news of the grant of eight hundred thousand livres was very acceptable to the King, and to all his ministers. The order for your pension is promised on Monday next, I'll take care about it. Madame de Vins engages to procure M. de Grignan leave to retire. His Majesty was dressed in so fine and rich a suit, that every body present was puzzled to guess the meaning of it. Adieu, dear daughter, I don't know what's the matter with me, but I am weary of writing to you; what can that mean, have I then ceased to love you? I cannot think I have, and I believe you don't think so either. I long vastly to hear you chat upon

upon a variety of subjects, and to testify the warmth of my affection for you in person.

LETTER CCCCI.

To the same.

Paris, Wednesday, 9 December, 1676.

HERE'S another letter, which I must direct to you at Lyons. I expect one from you this evening: I shall rave like a mad woman, if I hear that you have deferred your departure. Daughter, I must chide you for two or three things: you did not tell me your opinion of the little nun at St. Mary's, yet you know I am very fond of her. You never once mentioned the affair of the agents of Provence. I have forgot the third accusation, if I recollect it you shall hear of it. I may be as angry as I please, now that you are at Lyons, for, doubtless, you cannot be so much offended, as to go back to Grignan; but if you were still at Aix, you would think me in so ill a humour, as to decline coming to see me. In order to revenge myself, I have just sent to M. de Grignan a letter, which contains the most agreeable intelligence. Mons. de Pomponne has very seasonably paid down our five thousand livres. The King, when he granted the pension, said, with a smile, you tell me every year that it shall be the last time. To this Mons. de Pomponne pleasantly answered, Sire, all pensions are spent in your service. His Majesty was informed likewise, that the Marquis of St. Andiol * was agent for the country; this made the King smile a second time, and he added, that he saw very well, that M. de Grignan had been concerned in that nomination.

Mons. de Pomponne said to him, Sire, the election was made unanimously, and without any wrangling or cabal. Thus the conversation ended. Depend upon it, I shall begin to scold again; if you had asked the place of feneschal of Grasse a little sooner, you would have obtained it; the Chevalier de Sequiran applied for it, and it was granted to him about three weeks ago;

* Laurence Veradier, Marquis of St. Andiol, was brother-in-law to M. de Grignan.

he sold it for ten thousand livres, a sum which would have been of great service to you. There's nothing lost by proposing certain things ; one has, at least, the pleasure of discovering whether they are feasible. Adieu, my dear daughter, I have scolded you enough already, but now this first gust of ill humour is blown over, you shall meet with nothing but mildness, tenderness, and transports of joy, not to be surpassed at our approaching interview. The Chevalier and Corbinelli have resolved not to write to you any more. The Abbé de la Victoire is dead and buried.

LETTER CCCCH.

To the Same.

Paris, Sunday Evening, 13 December, 1676.

HOW greatly am I obliged to you, my dear child, for undergoing so much trouble, fatigue, languor, cold, hoar frost, and watching. I think I have, as it were, suffered all this distress with you ; you were never a moment out of my thoughts, I followed you every where in my imagination ; and a thousand times I thought, that I was not worthy of the great trouble to which you put yourself on my account ; I mean this with a view to some particular points, for my tenderness and friendship greatly enhance my merit with you. Good God, what a journey you had of it, and in what a season ! You will arrive precisely on the shortest day of the year, and will of consequence bring us back the sun. I have seen a device, which suits me exactly, 'tis a tree withered, and in a manner dead, with this inscription round it, *finche sol ritorni*, till the sun returns. What do you think of it, daughter ? I shall say no more to you of your journey, I shall henceforward observe a profound silence upon that head ; we'll draw the curtain over twenty days of the most extreme fatigue, and we will endeavour to give a different course to your animal spirits, and different ideas to your imagination. I will not go to Melun, I am apprehensive that a dissipation, so little conducive to repose, might make you

* The Abbé Lenet.

pass

pass the night badly : but I shall expect you to dine with me at Villeneuve St. Georges : you will find the soup quite warm ; and, without doing injustice to any one, you will there meet with a person, who of all mankind has the most thorough affection for you. The Abbé will wait your coming in your own apartment, which shall be well lighted, and a good fire in it. My dear child, how great is my joy ! can I ever feel one more exquisite and affecting ?

Here the letters of the year 1676 are concluded, on account of the arrival of Madame de Grignan at Paris ; they begin again in the month of June, 1677 ; that is to say, immediately after her departure for Grignan.

LETTER CCCIII.

To the same.

Paris, Tuesday, 8 June, 1677.

NO, my daughter, I shall say nothing of my sentiments for you, not so much as a single word ; the affections of my heart are sufficiently known to you : but can I conceal from you, the uneasiness which I feel on account of your health : I had not before been wounded in this part ; this first trial is a severe one ; I pity you for having the same anxiety upon my account ; would to God my apprehensions were as groundless as yours are ! My only consolation arises from the assurance given me by Mr. de Grignan, that he would not push your fortitude too far ; he is entrusted with a life upon which mine entirely depends : that, indeed is no reason why he should double his care ; his own amity for you is the strongest reason that can be assigned. It is through my reliance hereupon, my dear Count, that I again recommend to you my daughter : observe her well, speak to Montgobert, take your measures jointly in an affair of such importance. Dear Montgobert I depend greatly upon you. Ah, my dear child, you shall not want for any care from those that are about you ; but their care will avail you nothing, if you do not watch over yourself. You think yourself better than any body else does, and if you imagine, that you have strength enough to go to Grignan, and soon after find

yourself

yourself too weak to return to Paris ; in a word, if the physicians of that country, who will be unwilling to lose the credit of your cure, should reduce you to a state of still greater weakness ; do not think that I shall be able to support such an affliction. But I am willing to hope that you will do well to the shame of this country. I shall not be very uneasy about the disgrace which it will bring on our native air, provided I hear that you are in a better state of health. I am at present with the good natured Troche, whose friendship is peculiarly engaging ; no body else was for my purpose ; I shall write again to you to-morrow ; do not deprive me of this my only consolation. I have a great longing to hear from you : for my part, I am in perfect health, shedding tears does me no manner of hurt. I have dined, I am now going in quest of Madame de Vins, and Mademoiselle de Meri. Adieu, my dear children, the carriage which I saw parting from hence, is what entirely engrosses my mind, 'tis the subject of all my thoughts.

Madame de la Troche, to the same.

My dear friend has just communicated to me the affliction she labours under. She has just dined with me, and is now a little easier in her mind than she was ; endeavour to preserve your health, beautiful Countess, and all will be well ; don't deceive her concerning it, or, to speak more properly, don't deceive yourself ; watch yourself, and don't neglect the least pain or least heat that you feel in your stomach : 'tis of the highest consequence both to you and your amiable mother. Farewell, charming Countess, I assure you that I am very earnest about her health, and that I am yours with the most sincere affection.

LETTER CCCCIV.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday, 9 June, 1677.

I WAS yesterday to see Madame de Vins, and Mademoiselle de Meri, as I informed you ; they had neither of them received the notes which I got you to write for them : this disappointment made me fly into a passion

passion with the handsome Abbé. I was sorry that I had not taken upon me the care of all your little expresses, I love to be punctual. But, my dear child, how do you find yourself? Have you slept tolerably? You are just gone, though 'tis but six o'clock in the morning. Madame de Coulanges sends, to desire me to call upon her at Chaleville, where she is, in order to go dine at Versailles with M. de Louvois, whom I should not have seen for a long time without that opportunity. I shall therefore make this little excursion; M. de Barillon accompanies us.

I am in exceeding good health; would to God you had recovered your good constitution as I have mine; your health is, at present, my only care. I heard yesterday, that nothing is better for your disorder than chicken water, and that Madame du Frenoi, in a great measure owed her recovery to it. Mademoiselle Meri has acquired more skill by her own experience, than a physician in perfect health ever did by his learning and practice; she will soon write to you, and send me her letter. Farewel, my angel, I speak to you as you always speak to me; remember that my health depends totally upon yours, and that nothing upon earth can do me good except you recover.

LETTER CCCCV.

To the Same.

Paris, Friday, 11 June, 1677.

I CAN'T help thinking, that if I had no disorder except in my stomach, and you had none except in your head, we should neither of us complain; but the state of your stomach gives me great uneasiness, and you are equally anxious about my head; well, for your sake, I'll do more for it than it deserves; and I beg, that you will, in return, take care to wrap up your stomach in cotton. I am sorry that you wrote me so long a letter upon your arrival at Melun; at that time repose was what you chiefly wanted. Take care of yourself, my dear child, don't be terrified with groundless fears; endeavour to come and finish your visit, since, as you say, destiny, that is, providence, has,

has, contrary, to all reason, made that which you intended me so short. You will be much more capable of putting this design in execution when in health, than in your present languishing state ; and since you are desirous that my heart and head should be perfectly at ease, never think that they can be so, if your disorder should increase. What a dismal, what a melancholy day was that of our separation ! You wept, my dear child, and that's a thing of consequence in you ; in me it is not so, 'tis a habit resulting from my constitution. The circumstance of your ill state of health, contributes greatly to increase my sorrow : I am of opinion, that if I had nothing to suffer but my being absent from you, during some time I could bear it well enough ; but the idea of your being so thin, of your feeble voice, fallen countenance, and fine breast so altered, that one would hardly think it the same, is what I am utterly unable to support. If then you are desirous of doing me the greatest favour I can ask of you, make it your chief endeavour to get the better of the disorder which you now labour under.

Ah, my daughter, how great is the triumph at Versailles ! what an increase of pride ! what a solid establishment ! what a Dutchesse of Valentinois ! what pleasure occasioned even by broils and absence ! what a recovery of possession ! I was a whole hour in her chamber, she lay upon the bed in a rich gown, with her head-dress on ; she was, according to the Spanish custom, taking her repose for midnight. I presented her your compliments, she answered in the most polite terms, and praised you highly ; her sister, with all the vain glory of Nischen, cast several reflections upon the unhappy Io, and laughed at her being so audacious as to complain of her. Imagine to yourself every thing that an ungenerous pride can suggest, when triumphant, and you will not be far from the mark. 'Tis said, that the youngest sister will soon resume her former place amongst the ladies that attend upon his Majesty's sister-in-law. She took a solitary walk with la Mereuil, in the garden of the Maréchal du Plessis ; she went once to hear mass. Farewel, my dear daughter, I have been quite destitute, quite sad, since you left me. We should

should consider nothing but providence, Sir, in this separation ; otherwise it will be impossible to comprehend it ; but perhaps 'tis the means which God makes use of in order to restore your health. I believe so, I hope so, my dear Count, you have as it were answered for it ; make it, therefore, the chief object of your care, I conjure you.

LETTER CCCCVI.

To the Same.

Paris, Friday, 14 June, 1677.

I Received the letter you wrote me from Villeneuve-la-Guerre. 'Tis with pleasure, my child, that I learn from it that you are better, and that repose, silence, and your complaisance for those who have the care of you, have procured you a state of tranquillity which you never enjoyed here. As long as I live, you may, with security, entertain hopes of a recovery : I will ingenuously own to you, that no remedy in the world is more efficacious in giving me ease, than being freed from the idea, in which I saw you some days since. I can't support that thought ; I was so struck with it, that I could not conceive how much your absence contributed to my disorder. I have not hitherto entered into the reflections which naturally spring from the joy I have in seeing you, and the insipid life I lead without you ; I have as yet done nothing but think of your health, and shudder at the idea of what may come to pass ; when my mind is at ease upon that head, I hope you will begin to think of your return. But what a pity it is that you should lavish your inquietude upon my health, which is now perfectly restored, and which can be destroyed only by the injury you do to yours ! Avail yourself then of your reason, to prevent your being preyed upon by considerations, which are not capable of shaking the minds of persons whose abilities are altogether mean, and exert your courage, that you may not become the dupe of the vain phantoms of an imagination, too susceptible of terror. I have you at an advantage when I write to you, you never answer, and I may make my discourse as prolix

as I think proper. What Montgobert says of the tied cod-piece, is one of the most diverting stories I have heard ; untie it, daughter, and don't be so earnest about trifles : for my part, my anxiety is but too well grounded ; the condition in which I left you is by no means a vision. It has alarmed M. de Grignan, and all your friends. It makes me almost frantic when they tell me, you will cause each others death, you should by all means be separated ; a fine remedy truly, perfectly calculated to put an end to all my ills at once : not however in the sense that they mean : they read my inward thoughts, and perceived that I was uneasy about you ; and what should I be more concerned about than you ? I never knew any thing more unjust, than the treatment which I have met with for some time past. I don't complain of you ; on the other hand, I am perfectly satisfied with your affection for me ; you have not concealed your amity as you thought you did. What will you say ? Is it possible you can extract evil from so much good ? Speak to me no longer in that stile : I must indeed be very unreasonable, not to be fully satisfied with you. Don't chide me for writing too much, it gives me pleasure : I shall here stop short, and discontinue writing till to-morrow.

Tuesday 15.

I have just received two of your letters, dated from Auxerre : d'Hacqueville has been here ; he was transported with joy at hearing of you. What thanks I ought to return to God, on account of your present state of health ! In a word, you sleep, you eat a little, and you enjoy repose ; you are no longer oppressed, wasted, and a burthen to yourself, as you were some days since : Ah, my daughter, how secure is my health, when yours begins to mend ! When you speak of the hurt which you have done me, it was merely by the condition in which I saw you ; for with regard to our separation, the hope of seeing you again, sooner than ordinary, would have rendered it supportable : but when life is in question, Ah, my dear daughter, it is a grief, the pangs of which I never felt before, and I must own, I should have sunk under it. 'Tis therefore your part to deliver me from the greatest of all.

all evils. I wait the coming of your letters with an impatience, which thoroughly convinces me, that your health is my chief concern. I follow you from stage to stage. To-morrow you will be at Chalons, where you will find one of my letters; this goes directly to Lyons. The Chevalier is beginning to recover, the fever has left him, as I was informed by the handsome Abbé, who is so punctual in delivering your letters.

Io * was at mass, she was gazed at under covert, but every body is insensible to her misfortunes and her melancholy. She will soon lead the poor life she led formerly; the reason for this is obvious, it is not hard to conjecture it. No triumph was ever more compleat than that of the others: it seems to be thoroughly established since it resisted the first attack. I was about an hour in that apartment, it breathes nothing but joy and prosperity; I would be glad to know who would trust to it henceforward. Farewel, dear daughter, I am very well pleased that M. de Grignan approves of your intended return. Your little brother is in Gargan, in Bagnole, he never alights: yet his journey is never the shorter for that. Truly here's a mother well guarded. Believe once for all, daughter, that my health depends upon yours; would to God you resembled me in this?

LETTER CCCCVII.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday, 16 June, 1677.

SO this letter will find you at Grignan, sweet creature! How do you find yourself now? Have M. de Grignan and Montgobert derived all the honour they expected from this conduct? I have followed you every where, my dear child, has not your heart, as it were, seen into mine during the whole journey? I still expect your letters from Chalons and Lyons. I have just received a short letter from Mons. des Issards †, he has seen

* Madame de Ludre, Canoness of Poussor.

† A person of quality at Avignon.

and

and contemplated you ; you spoke to him, you assured him, that you were in better health ; I wish you knew how happy that has made him, and what I would give to have the same satisfaction. You should endeavour, daughter, to cure, at once, both your mind and body ; and if you do not wish to die in your own country, and surrounded by your friends, you should, for the future, endeavour to see things just as they are, and not magnify them by the force of imagination, nor think that I am sick, when I am in good health ; if you don't form this resolution, it will be prescribed to you, as part of your regimen, never to see me : I don't know what effect this remedy might have upon you ; but with regard to myself, it would infallibly put an end to my life. Reflect seriously upon that ; when I was uneasy about you, I had too strong reasons for being so ; would to God it had been only a dream ! the concern of your friends, and the alteration visible in your face, too well confirmed my apprehensions and my terrors. Therefore, my dear child, do all that lies in your power, to render your return agreeable, as your departure was sorrowful and melancholy. With regard to me, what should I do ? Should I be well, I am well ; should I take care of my health, I do it for your sake ; in a word, should I make myself entirely easy upon your account ? 'Tis what I can't answer for, when I see you in such a condition as that you was lately in. I speak to you with sincerity, don't neglect my advice : and when they come by and by, to tell me in how good a state of health you are ; and when, at the same time, you are yourself at ease ; we shall then be both very well. I say very well ; this is an admirable regimen ; since to enjoy our health we must be two hundred thousand leagues distant from each other ; and this they tell me with an air of composure and gravity, at the same time that it makes me mad but to think on it.

For God's sake, dear daughter, let us endeavour to recover our reputation, by shewing ourselves more reasonable in another journey ; when I say us, I mean you ; and let us no longer give occasion to peoples saying, you will be the death of each other. I am so dis-
couraged

couraged by such discourse, that I am almost weary of my life ; there are other ways of killing me, which would prove much more effectual. I send you herewith the account which Corbinelli wrote me of our Cardinal, and his worthy actions. Mons. de Grignan will take great pleasure in perusing this narrative of his conduct. You must certainly have received some of my letters at Lyons. I have seen the coadjutor, I don't think him in the least altered ; we had a great deal of conversation about you ; he spoke of the folly of your bathing, and told me you were afraid of growing too fat ; the hand of God is undoubtedly over you : pray what should you fear, after being delivered of six children ? You are in the wrong to laugh at Madame Bagnol's, since you are capable of admitting such visionary notions. I was t'other day at St. Maur, in company with Madame de St. Geran and d'Hacqueville, every body spoke in your praise : Madame dela Fayette made a thousand professions of friendship for you.

The Duke and Dutchess of Orleans are at one of their villas, and will soon quit it for another ; their whole retinue is with them. The King will pay them a visit, but I apprehend that his retinue will accompany him. Mortals are still as bloody and hard-hearted as ever ; is it possible that dupes should still be found upon the face of the earth ? News is expected every day of an engagement at seven leagues from Commerci : M. de Lorrain would gladly gain it in the heart of his own country, and in sight of one of his cities ; M. de Crequi would be very sorry to lose it, because one and one make two. The armies are but two leagues distant from each other, without even the river to separate them, for M. de Lorrain has passed it : I am by no means averse to hear the result of this affair ; Boufflers is the nearest relation I have in the army of the Marcéchal de Crequi. Dear daughter, farewell, and make the best use of your reflections and of mine ; continue to love me, and don't conceal the precious treasure of your affection from me. Don't be apprehensive that my tenderness for you can do me any hurt, my life depends upon it.

LETTER CCCCVIII.

To the same.

Paris, Friday, 18 June, 1677.

MY thoughts are quite taken up with you, I can't help thinking, that as you arrived yesterday in the evening at Lyons pretty much fatigued, you should immediately have got yourself bled, in order to prevent the ill consequences of being over-heated. You must certainly have suffered a good deal upon the road. I hope you wrote to me when at Chalons, and that you will write again from Lyons. I must go in quest of some of the Grignans ; I can't live without conversing with somebody connected with you. I'll go to the Marchioness d'Huxelles, and to Mademoiselle de Méri : in a word I must have intelligence concerning you. You have heard from me both at Chalons and Lyons ; I send you now a second letter to Montelimart. It will doubtless divert you, to hear me still talk of Lyons, and your journey : yet I cannot help dwelling upon that topic ; but to come to the present time at once, how do you find yourself at your castle ? Did you think your pretty children worthy of amusing you ? Is your health in the state I would have it ? Days slip away, daughter, as you justly observe, and I far from being displeased at it, as I am when you are here ; I do all I can to make them pass away more quickly ; I shall have no objection to their rapidity till we are together again. I depend upon la Garde for your information with respect to the news, and for letting you know the disgrace which M. has undergone, he was looked upon as an indolent person, as a man who hated a military life, which is just the reverse of a good officer. What do you think has been done to him ? They have valued his place which he bought for forty-five thousand crowns, at two hundred thousand livres ; and he was obliged to pay one half of it for the place of Villarceau. His wife threw herself upon her knees before the King in order to soften his rigour, but his Majesty told her, that he did not oblige her husband to quit the service with a view to

please

please him. Application was made to M. de Lorvois, who said, that the King did not approve of such service: thus their mortification was compleat, and sufficiently proves, that no sin now-a-days is more severely punished than indolence; others may sometimes be compounded for, but this is altogether unpardonable. I stop here, in order to make a short excursion in town.

I am just come back. I heard the salutation with the good Marchioness d'Huxelles; I was then desirous of seeing Mademoiselle de Mérité, she was gone with Madame Mereuil. I went in quest of some of the Grignans, for I could not dispense with seeing them. The coadjutor had just left his house in order to come to me, I ran after him, he is here, and he writes to you at present. I conjure you, daughter, if you love me, not to lodge in your apartment at Grignan; the coadjutor tells me that there is an oven under your bed, and I know there is one above it: so that if you don't remove from these ovens, you will suffer more by the heat than you did here; pray comply with this request. I was informed that the King was at St. Cloud, he was alone, and the fair one was in bed. You will be told whether the ladies did not go in quest of him; for my part, I heard nothing of the matter since. The handsome Abbé will inform you, that some of our poor brethren have been suspected of being desirous of making some amendment at Rome, in the late concessions, and that they were repulsed, and an order given to all the Bishops not to think of it; they have all promised it, and the probability is one of the opinions least likely to be established.

LETTER CCCCIX.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday, 23 June, 1677.

I HAVE been five days without hearing from you; this time has appeared to me very irksome and tedious. At last I have received your letter from Chagny, and your letter from Chalons. Lord, daughter, what just reason you had to complain of that mountain of la Rochepot!

Rochepot! What a troublesome place it is! and what a sad perplexity, that, even in the month of June, the roads of Burgundy should be unpassable! You tell me great matters of your health: but why does not M. de Grignan say a word about it? after you have suffered so severely, he should give me some encouragement. The tranquillity of the same must have been of great service to you. Do you remember our sad and cruel adieu in those plains? it is still present to my imagination. Those that reside there have their evils; and all the places where they have seen what they regret, excite in them gloomy ideas. I entertain as good hopes as I can; your health, my dear daughter, is one of the foundations of this hope, you know the others. Fatigue and tedious journeys have given me infinite trouble. Let us speak no longer of Vichi, unless you have immediate occasion for a dragon to go thither: I don't know what I should have done, had I undertaken such a journey with so many little affairs upon my hands; I never once thought of it, when you were with me; in a word, I could not hitherto go to Livri. Madame de la Fayette is returned from St. Maur very much out of order, her fever is increased considerably, and attended by a very severe cholick, she has been bled; if her fever continues she cannot live long: her friends think of nothing but this new misfortune. The Duke is perfectly well, I shall make heavy complaints to him of these dangerous roads. I leave it to my son to give you his opinion with regard to epic poetry, and the excellent lectures you have made upon it. I'll take care to present your compliments to all those you have named, the memory of absent friends is precious: the Princess of Tarente is in despair, at not having been able to see you again: just say a word concerning her, and concerning the good Morbeuf who adores you, because you are beloved by me: I take pleasure in delivering your little letters.

The coadjutor will inform you of the success of his extraordinary compliment to the King, and of his being at liberty, to stay here as long as he thinks proper. The Abbé de Grignan dismisses others, as he expects one day to be dismissed himself. The Abbé de Noailles

Noailles * did not think proper to accept of the Bishoprick of Mende: his father and mother say, that this son is their only comfort, that his absence would occasion their deaths; well! he may get a bishoprick situated nearer to them. For my part, I should have taken what was offered me, without my asking it: but they are both good and wise.

We dined at Mons. d'Harouis's, the Cardinal d'Estre, the family of the Brancas, Madame d'Huxelles, Madame des Coulances, and myself. You were by no means forgot; Mons. d'Harouis has a grateful remembrance of you. I spoke kindly to Madame Gargan. Say something to the good-natured d'Escar, who, you know, would go any lengths to serve you: I torment you to be sure, but my reason for it is, that I don't love to hear any one complain of my daughter.

Don't chide me for the length of my letters, I don't write them entirely at a sitting, I resume them at intervals, and they are so far from giving me trouble, that writing to you is my only pleasure. To this pass are we reduced by absence; to write and receive letters supplies the place of seeing and conversing with the person whom we love better than ourselves.

You have wrote to me from your bark and from Theze †; wherever you are, you think of me; and I may say at least that I do you justice by a suitable return of gratitude and sensibility to your kindness. I apprehended that you would suffer some inconveniency in your voyage, but the bark came just at the proper time. I entirely approve of your resolution always to prefer travelling by water to travelling by land: but don't for that reason go and embark upon a voyage to the country of the Sevarambes ‡; you appear to me to be too near them already. I thank you for the fable of the fly; it is quite divine: we are at every turn liable to meet with occurrences which put us in mind

* Lewis Anthony de Noailles, afterwards Bishop of Chalons upon Marne; and at last promoted to the dignities of Cardinal and Archbishop of Paris.

† A castle belonging to Messieurs de Rochebonne.

‡ An imaginary people.

of her ; see what a dust I raise ! Good God, what humour there is in that stroke ! The little fly has no doubt that the cloud of dust was raised by herself. There are others likewise who resemble the fly of Fontenelle *, and always think that they have done every thing themselves. Your instructions relating to the golden mountain are a little extravagant ; nobody but one paralytic, would use a bath of so prodigious a warmth ; and that very few would be willing to destroy their health, and discompose the machine in its most perfect state, to cure a trifling disorder of the hands. I will send you the opinion of M. Veson. See your mind at ease, my daughter, and be persuaded, that, for love of you, I will do whatever I am directed. So you always go in quest of my letters as far as Grignan. I think you must be this evening at Valence ; if I am not out in my calculation, you have already received my letters directed to Lyons. I took notice of the warmth with which you recommend me to Mons. de la Garde ; he behaves in the kindest manner imaginable to me, because he knows you love me, and that 'tis doing you a pleasure : you yourself are one of my principal sources of pleasure ; I can't be long without the company of some of the Grignans ; I seek for them, I wish for them, I have occasion for them. The fair Io is † at Bouchet ; the tranquillity of solitude pleases her more than the court or Paris. Whilst she was upon this little journey, she was obliged to pass a night in the fields ; this was occasioned by the breaking of her chariot, and all those circumstances that attend an unfortunate accident. The young lad ‡ will give you an account of my health ; he has more business on his hands than consoling me ; no creature is so busy as a man that is not in love, he plays his part in five or six different places ! what a slavery ! I must repeat it once more, don't chide me for the length of my letters, it is not the work of an evening ; and how can I employ myself more to my own satisfaction ? Madame de la Fayette has her health better than she had. Madame

* See the fable of the sow and the fly.

† The same that is spoken of by the name of Io in page 161.

‡ Mous. de Sévigné.

de Schomberg makes you a thousand professions of friendship.

LETTER CCCCX.

To the Same.

Paris, 25 June 1677.

YOU are now arrived at Grignan, daughter. In the first place let me know, whether the heat, the air, the north-east wind, and the Rhone have been hurtful to you ? I next desire to hear from you news of the little Marquis and Paulina ; I shall receive full information upon all these points before this letter comes to hand : but it is impossible for us not to discover our thoughts when we take pen in hand, though we are aware that it is to no purpose. I am very well satisfied with the kindness shewn me by all your relations ; I love them, and their friendship is necessary for me on other accounts, besides the consideration of their merit. M. de la Garde never once hesitated to think that it was I, and not Madame Gargan that you recommended to him. I was yesterday in company with Madame Coulanges at the royal palace ; O, what a dust I make ! Is not this one of your applications ? Is it both just and facetious ? We were as well received as we could wish ; the Duke of Orleans was pensive, and spoke only to me on account of you and the waters. The Dutchess seemed at first to consider me in a particular manner ; but as soon as the Abbé de Chavigny came in, my star visibly grew pale ; in speaking of this Abbé, I would gladly use the footman's expression ; he must certainly have got the cord of somebody that was hanged. The Dutchess de V—— is in high favour with the Dutches of Orleans ; notwithstanding this, she does not discover any superiority of genius, or shine in conversation more than her neighbours. I, with great attention contemplated that chamber, and those places of distinction, which were formerly so well filled. The Princess of Tarente was seated by the Dutches of Orleans : they conversed together for a long time : the little de Grignan would improve greatly

by hearing them*. Dear daughter, I am in perfect health, but must still say, God grant you were as well as I am! I shall go this evening to Livri with d'Hacqueville ; to-morrow we shall go dine at Pomponne ; Madame de Vins waits for us there with the rest of the family. I send you herewith a ballad of M. de Coulanges's, I think it pleasant enough : though the physicians forbid you to sing, I make no doubt but you will disobey them, in favour of this whimsical parody.

Io is in the country, and has not been able to support that simple character, which it is indeed, very difficult to perform. I'll advise with the coadjutor what book should be sent you. I happen at present to be reading Lucian over again ; who that has read him can read any other author ?

M. de Sévigné continues.

To shew you that your brother, the † sub-lieutenant, is a much prettier fellow than you think him, I take the pen from the hands of my dear mamma, in order to let you know, that I acquit myself to admiration of my duty. We mutually guard each other ; we allow each other an honourable liberty ; we make use of no womanish remedies. Our conversations run thus. My dear mamma, you seem to be in very good health, I am very glad of it. You slept well last night ; how is your head-ach ? Have you no vapours ? Well, God be praised. Go take the air, go to St. Maur, sup with Madame de Schomberg, take a walk in the Tuileries ; then you have no disorder, then I give you full liberty to go where you please. Do you chuse to eat strawberries, or to drink tea ? The strawberries are best. Adieu, mamma, my heel is hurt. I shall stay with you, if you please, from twelve to three o'clock, and then let affairs go how they will. Thus, gentle sister, do rational people behave themselves. The unfortunate

* As these two Princesses constantly conversed in the language of their own country ; Madame Sévigné said, that her grandson, who was learning the German, would greatly improve by listening to them.

† He had just bought M. de la Fare's place of sub-lieutenant of the Dauphin's Gend'armes, of which he had been ensign before.

Io is at Pouffet with Madame le Clerempo, to use her own pronunciation; she passed a whole night forlorn, like another Ariadne; Ah, why was not Bacchus in the way to comfort her, and make her crown shine among the stars? Alas, he was perfectly easy, and perhaps upon a high mountain, where, according to the order established by God in this world, an alley is also to be found. Farewel, my dear sister.

LETTER CCCCXL.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday, 30 June, 1677.

ON at length you inform me, that you are arrived at Grignan: Your uninterrupted correspondence with me, is a continued mark of your affection: I assure you at least, that you are not mistaken in the opinion, that I stand in need of assistance; indeed nobody can be more in want of it. It is true, however, and I sincerely think it, that your presence would have been of much greater service to me: but your situation was so extraordinary, that the same considerations that determined you to go, made me consent to your departure, without doing any thing more than stifle my sentiments. It was a crime in me to discover any uneasiness with regard to your health: I saw you perishing before my eyes, and was not permitted to shed a tear, it was killing you, it was assassinating you, I was constrained to suppress my grief: I never knew a more cruel or more unprecedented species of torture. If, instead of that constraint, which only increased my affliction, you had been willing to own yourself in a languishing condition; and if your friendship for me, had been productive of complaisance, and made you discover a real desire to follow the advice of physicians, to take nourishment, to observe a regimen, and to own that repose, and the air of Livri, had done you good; this would indeed have comforted me; but your obstinately opposing all my sentiments aggravated my grief and anxiety. Ah, my daughter, in the conclusion we were so circumstanced, that we could not possibly avoid doing as we did. God explained to us his will by that

conduct : but we should endeavour to try, whether he will not permit us mutually to reform ; and whether instead of that despair, which you condemned me to through friendship, it would not be more natural and more beneficial to give our hearts the liberty they require, and without which it is impossible for us to lead a life of tranquillity. Thus I have declared my mind to you, once for all : but let us make reflections upon the past, that whenever it pleases God to bring us together again, we may carefully avoid falling into the same inconveniences. The relief which you have found in the fatigues of so long a journey sufficiently proves the necessity you lay under of laying aside all constraint. Extraordinary remedies are necessary for persons of an extraordinary character ; physicians would never have dream'd of such an one as that I have just mentioned : God send it may continue to produce the same good effect, and that the air of Grignan may not prove hurtful to you. I could not avoid writing to you in this manner, in order to ease my heart, and intimate to you, that we should endeavour at our next meeting, not to give any one an opportunity of telling us very politely, that we can never be happy till separated. I am astonished at the patience that can bear so cruel a thought.

You brought the tears into my eyes in speaking of your little son. Alas, poor child, who can bear to see him in such a condition ? I don't retract what I always thought concerning him, but am of opinion, that even through tenderness, one should wish him already in the place to which felicity seems to call him. Paulina appears to me to deserve being made a subject of raillery by you ; her resemblance should not displease you, at least, I hope it does not. That little quadrangular nose, is a feature, which you cannot possibly dislike in yourself *. It seems to me somewhat pleasant, that the noses of the Geignan family should admit no other shape but that, and should be altogether averse to one formed like yours ; it was much more worthy of their notice, but they dreaded extremes, tho' they did not dread

* This alludes to Madame de Sévigné's nose, which inclined to the square.

that modification. The little Marquis is a very pretty fellow, you should not be at all uneasy at his not being altered for the better. Talk to me a great deal about the people you live amongst, and the amusement they afford you. I returned last Sunday from Livri. I have had neither the coadjutor, nor any of the Grignan family with me, since I have been here. I leave la Garde to inform you of the news ; all things appear to me to be upon the old footing. He is at full liberty in the meadows, and free from the observation of any Argus. Juno thunders and triumphs. Corbinelli returns*. I shall in two days time go to receive him at Livri. The Cardinal is as fond of him as we are ; the fat Abbé has shewn me facetious letters which they write to you. In fine, after having passed through many different scenes, the soul is still the same ; his eminence was highly delighted with so new a genius as that of our friend. Farewell, dear daughter, continue to love me with unabated affection ; give me an account of the state you are in, in a few words, for I would advise you by all means to avoid prolixity. For my part, I have nothing to do but correspond with you, and I resume a letter several different times. I don't apprehend that Madame de Coulanges will go to Lyons, she has too much business upon her hands here ; Oh what a dust I raise ! How comes it that you have a sister, and that it is not Madame de Rochbonne ? I could wish you had the same sentiments for one as for the other ; yet I grant you they are not exactly in the same predicament.

LETTER CCCCXII.

To the same.

Friday morning, 2 July, 1677.

I AM going directly to Livri to hear mass. Corbinelli will arrive to-day or to-morrow ; I take pleasure in waiting for him upon the high road of Chalons, and shall take him out of his coach at the end of the

* From Commerci, whether he went to see the Cardinal de Retz.

avenue, in order to carry him home, and make him pass a day with us : we shall have a good deal of chat, and I will give you an account of our conversation. I shall return on Sunday next ; for a certain affair, in which I constantly hope to be successful, still prevents me from settling at Livry : to tell you the truth, 'tis that butterfly of which I spoke to my son ; on which, though you may think to set your foot, he constantly flies away. I meet with nothing but opposition to all my desires, whether of great or little importance. If I did not look up to providence, I should lose all patience. I leave a footman to bring me my letters ! Ah, my daughter, I support existence during all other days, merely in expectation of that on which they come, and the moral reflections with which your letters abound, are always seasonable, when I consider the transitory state of all human affairs.

Io returned to Versailles immediately after the Duke of Orleans ; this piece of news does not make the least noise. Quanto and her friend are longer together, and that in a more affectionate manner than ever they used to be : the ardour of the first years they passed together still subsists, and all constraint is banished, in order to excite a belief, that no empire was ever more firmly established. I have known persons who were of opinion, that instead of going to Bouchet, when the Duke of Orleans is at Paris, and returning to court when he returns, it would be much better to stay at Paris with the Duke, and go to the country when he returns to Versailles.

Madame des Coulanges has left off going to Lyons ; her sister goes thither still. The good-natured Morbeuf has just taken her leave of me ; she expresses the highest affection imaginable for you, and gives you her best compliments. My son goes frequently to L'Isle, he is extremely well received there. If you were but once happy, all would be well. Farewell, my dear child, I wait with impatience to hear how you get your health, and how the world goes at Grignan. Your little one gives me great concern. Follow our advice with regard to the timidity of the eldest ; if you tease him, you will disconcert him in such a man-

a manner, that he will never recover ; ; 'tis an affair of the last consequence. The Duke desired me yesterday to give you his compliments, and to tell you that it was owing to his orders, that you found the roads so bad ; but that you shall, at your return, find them strewed with flowers. My dear child, I shall here take my leave of you, I love you with an uncommon tenderness ; and you return it in a manner which will not fail to make it last. If you wish that I should enjoy my health, take care of your own, and give particular attention to the effect which the air of Grignan has upon you ; if it has not a good effect, it must certainly have a bad one.

LETTER CCCCXIII.

To the same.

Livri, Saturday, July 3, 1677.

A LAS, how afflicted am I by the death of your poor child * ! I could not help being greatly affected by it. Not that it ever was my opinion that he could live : the description that was given me of him, convinced me that his case was desperate. But, in fine, he is a loss to you, who have already lost three : God preserve to you the only one that remains. He discovers an admirable disposition ; I am much better pleased with his sound sense and just reasoning, than with the vivacity of those who turn out fools at twenty. Be satisfied with your son, my daughter, lead him like a horse that has a tender mouth, and give particular attention to what I told you concerning his bashfulness ; this advice comes from people greatly superior to me in understanding ; and it is easy to perceive, that nothing can be more just. With regard to Paulina, I have one word to say to you ; you represent her to me in such a manner, that she may perhaps, in time, become as handsome as yourself : when a child, you were exactly what you describe her to be ; God preserve her from having so perfect a resemblance, and a heart so sus-

* This is the child that was born in February, 1676, eight months after conception.

ceptible of tenderness as mine. In fine, I see that you love her, that she is amiable, and that she amuses you. I wish I had an opportunity of embracing her, and discovering that place which I have seen elsewhere.

I have been here ever since yesterday morning. I proposed to wait for Corbinelli as he passed and engage him at the end of the avenue, in order to amuse myself with his conversation till to-morrow. We took all possible care to compass this design ; we even sent to Clae, but it seems he had passed by half an hour before. I shall go to see him at Paris to-morrow, and I will write you an account of his journey, for I shall not finish this letter till Wednesday. O, my dear daughter, how do I wish that the nights with you were such as they are here ! how mild and refreshing is the air ! how serene the tranquillity ! how deep the silence ! I wish I could impart to you these advantages, and that your north-east wind was confounded. You tell me, that I am uneasy at your being so thin, I acknowledge it ; it but too plainly indicates your ill state of health. Your natural constitution inclines to fatness ; if God has not, as you say, punished you for destroying so fine a state of health, and a machine so well organized : such attempts are indeed occasioned by a sort of phrensy, and God is just when he punishes them. You endeavour to persuade me that you are by nature hard-hearted, in order to encourage me with regard to the loss of your child ; I don't know my dear child, whence you have derived that hardness of heart, I find you so only with regard to yourself : with respect to me, and all those whom you ought to love, you are but too sensible, this is your greatest misfortune ; it is this tenderness that undermines your constitution, and wastes you away ; do, dear daughter, deprive us of part of your tenderness, and dedicate it to the care of yourself ; look upon yourself as a person of some consequence, we shall be obliged to you for all the marks of friendship you give us thereby. I am surprized that the little Marquis and his sister, should shew no concern at the death of their little brother ; let us enquire

quire to what their indifference might be owing, not to your example surely.

My son goes from hence at the end of the month, his departure is indispensably necessary. The King has again spoke as if he had a persuasion, that Sévigné had copied the bad air of the subaltern officers of that company *. On the other hand, M. de la Trouse writes to him thus; come hither, come hither, and hobble amongst us; he must go, so there's an end of taking the waters. I shall not, however, neglect going to Vichi; we'll talk about this, 'twill be a journey of pure precaution, for I am in perfect health, and not at all uneasy about my hands. Madame de Morbeuf has had hers for two years in the same condition as mine, yet she recovered at last. Your brother is over head and ears in love: I am surprized at the trouble he gives himself about nothing; nothing in the world. He was yesterday caught by a husband in a private conversation with his wife. The husband seemed not at all pleased at the discovery, he spoke very roughly to his wife, and the alarm was spread about every where, when I set out yesterday. I'll write to you from Paris, to let you know the conclusion of this adventure. You will easily perceive, that the length of this letter, is owing to the abuse I make of the permission I have to prate at Livri, where I am alone, and have no sort of business upon my hands. I should, by right, condole with you upon the death of your child; but when I reflect, that he is now an angel in the presence of God, I can't help thinking but that it is improper to make use of the words grief and affliction; christians should be rejoiced at it, if they really have the principles of the religion which they profess.

* The company of the Dauphin's Gens d'armes.

LETTER CCCCXIV.

To the Same,

Paris, Wednesday, 7 July, 1677.

TAKE notice, dear daughter, that this letter was begun three days ago, and if it appears of an immeasurable length, 'tis owing to its having been wrote at leisure; add to this, that the paper, and my writing, makes its size seem excessive; there is more in one sheet of yours, than in six of mine: do not, therefore, consider this as an example, nor revenge yourself upon yourself, that is, upon me. I had a great deal of conversation with Corbinelli, he is charmed with the Cardinal; he said, he never knew so noble and aspiring a soul. Those of the antient Romans came the nearest to his. You are tenderly beloved by this exalted soul, and I am surer now than ever, that he never was wanting to his friendship for you; some misfortunes we must expect, and this is the effect of original sin. It would require a volume to give you a full account of all the extraordinary particulars I learned from him. The Baron has set all to rights by his address; he now knows as much as his masters, and more; for no one ever surpassed him in acting indifference; he plays it in so natural a manner, and truth imitates probability so well, that no jealousy or suspicion can be proof against such artful conduct. You would have laughed heartily, if you had known the whole of this adventure. I don't doubt but you guess the name of the husband; happen what will, the wife is going to lodge in your neighbourhood. Poor Isis did not go to Versailles, I was misinformed; she remained all the time in her solitude, and so she will during the journey to Villers Coterets; for which place, the Duke and Dutches of Orleans are just going to set out. You cannot sufficiently lament, or sufficiently admire the unhappy fate of this young creature: whenever a certain person speaks of her, she calls her that Rag. Success justifies every thing.

I have

I have seen the Abbé de Vergne ; the conversation turned again upon the state of my soul ; he told me he would not take the charge of it upon any other conditions, but confining me to my chamber, and directing me in exercises of piety, without suffering me to read, write, or hear a single word. He is very amiable, and the most entertaining companion in the world ; you may take it for granted, that you were not forgotten in the conversation. I dined with M. de la Garde, he is beloved by all that know him. He goes to see you, he carries you to his own house, he lodges you : in a word, what does he not do for you ? My thoughts are entirely taken up about putting our great house in order, we shall be unsettled till that is done ; and you are very sensible what a great mortification it will be to me, not to lodge in the same house with you : but we must, in every thing, submit to the determinations of providence. In your present leisure, make it your chief study to preserve your health ; do not dwell much upon the melancholly thought of your son's death ; 'twill prey upon you like a devouring dragon, if you indulge it ; you say very well, that for the honour of christianity, we should not lament the happiness of these little angels. At present the Cardinal enjoys his health ; however, he is sometimes threatened with an attack of the gout ; it seems to have a disposition to rise again. Such is the friendship I bear to this worthy Cardinal, that I should be inconsolable were you to refuse him yours. You should by no means think that he is indifferent about it.

LETTER CCCCXV.

To the Same.

Paris, Friday, 9 July, 1677.

YOU will not tell me to-day, that I have set you a bad example, and that you will kill yourself with the same sword. I formerly wrote you huge unwieldy packets, but now they are shunk into concise epistles ; I hope this short one will prove long enough. I am not, by my natural disposition, inclined to terrify you ; add to this, my dear child, that I have not yet
receipt ;

received your letters, I expect them either this evening, or to-morrow. The dearth of news is another reason for the shortness of my letter. Mons^r. de la Garde will tell you what he knows. I often talk of getting a preceptor for the little Marquis ; I am generally answered, that 'tis scarce possible to find a person with all the requisite endowments. I am greatly frightened by disorders which dry up the juices ; poor Madame de la Fayette is so threatened with one, that she thinks of nothing but ending her life like my aunt ; she is greatly pulled down since your departure ; she has not yet recovered of her cholick, she still takes broths, and after such slight nourishment she is in great emotion, and her sever increases just as if she had eat or drank to excess. Her physicians say, that 'tis a serious affair, and that if she goes on in this manner, she may linger away a miserable life, till she is wasted to the very bone. This information makes me uneasy ; I pity her because I love her, and I pity all those whose blood is so extremely subtle, that the least trifle is sufficient to set the whole machine in a flame. My dear child, when one has a great regard for a person, it is not ridiculous to wish that a blood, for which one is particularly concerned, should grow sedate and cool ; but you, as I apprehend, should endeavour to render your's thick, and avoid, as much as possible, thinking of that poor little boy that you have lost. I am much afraid, that notwithstanding all your fine harangues, you will make this accident a source of bitter reflections ; dear daughter, have compassion upon yourself and upon me. I hope you will not think this letter too long. Why don't those who have told us, that nothing can be better for us both than to be at two hundred leagues distant from each other, add, that we should likewise discontinue our correspondence. I wish they would.

LETTER CCCCXVI.

To the Same.

Paris, Wednesday, 14 July, 1677.

MY poor child, you have as it were, ceased to love me, by the advice of your physician ; were

MARCHIONESS DE SEVIGNE. 181

were we to form a judgment from your state of health, we should be apt to conclude, that this remedy bears a strong resemblance to the good man's powder: but then taking it, is like betting boldly at play. I will not tell you what effect the diminution of a friendship I so much value, would have upon me; but I can't conceal from you the pleasure which I take, in hearing that you both sleep and eat. If you would vouchsafe to give me a real proof of the friendship you had formerly for me, you would think of drinking cows milk; this would refresh you, and give you blood, which would circulate as gently as others, and which would restore you to that state in which I once saw you. What joy would this give me, my daughter, and under how great an obligation would it lay me? How secure will my health and life be, when you have delivered me from the inquietude which your illness makes me suffer. I shall say no more to you at present; I shall soon see whether you love me or no. I am very glad you are satisfied with your physician d'Amonio; if you had had him, he would doubtless have preserved the life of your son; he should have taken cooling remedies; I think his doctor discovered great ignorance, in prescribing medicines calculated to throw him into a heat: but the grand difficulty was, to alter what providence had decreed concerning this poor child. This misfortune is one of those, which require we should submit, without murmuring, to what is inflicted on us. 'Tis true indeed, I never thought he could live; how could you think, that a child, who had no teeth, and was scarce able to live at eighteen months old, should escape so great a danger. I am not as skilful as Madame de Puidu-Fou, but I did not imagine he could live with such symptoms: I am very well aware of the greatness of this third loss, and I feel the whole weight of it. Paulina gives me the highest delight. I spoke a while ago to the handsome Abbé about a preceptor, who is known to M. de la Mousse; they will see him, and let you know their opinion of him; they think the Marquis full young to begin; I told them, that tho' young in years, he was
not

not young in understanding. The handsome Abbé and I laughed, till we almost cried, at your history of the little Magdalen; I am surprised that you should say, you don't know how to tell a story, and that it is my talent. I assure you, you have given us a history of the little Magdalen's devotion with so much humour, that this story is in nothing inferior to that of the hermitess, with which I have been charmed. I find that hermits make a great figure in Provence. The good man got the hiccough by listening to the tale, and your brother will let you know his opinion of it.

M. de Sévigné.

I should by right say nothing to you, since you never trouble your head about me. You are so well pleased at being delivered, that you forget every thing you do not see. You no longer love my mother, and I, in order to be revenged, love you as little as you love her. We are all greatly edified by the devotion of the little Magdalen; you see plainly that it is only the fervour of a novice; observe to what the excess of her zeal has hurried her. I wish that our little Mary may turn out such another; but I wish, at the same time, that she may chuse me for her hermit. I fancy I should make an excellent hermit; or if any thing were wanting to me, I could easily get a frock made in such a manner, as to find means to hide my head in it upon an occasion, and that would be of great service to me. Mons. de Meurles Hare, tho' ill-shaped, became one of the finest in the province; and why should not I, by means of such a secret, become as cleaver a fellow as an hermit? Farewel, my dearest sister, I passionately love Paulina, I would gladly make her my heiress, in case I should die before our marriage takes place. I twice saw the little infante at her own houie: she is very pretty, very sprightly; I think I divert her; I had the good luck to make the grandmother laugh heartily, she told me, that she thought me a very pretty fellow: the young lady and I seem to understand one another pretty well, and thereupon we cast stolen glances at each other: this affair depends entirely upon providence.

Six

MARCHIONESS DE SEVIGNE. 183

Si Deus est pro nobis, quis contra nos? Faith, *nemo Dat mine.* Is not the good man in the right?

Madame de Sévigné.

'Tis easy to see that my son reads good books. You would do us a great pleasure, by giving us that sprightly girl, that little infante, who is at present never out of her mother's sight; if we don't bring about the marriage now, we never shall; we were never very good, but we may perhaps grow worse. I shall go to Livri for a short time, in order to breathe the clear air; Madame de la Fayette is so very ill, that I am ashamed to quit her on account of my pleasures; I shall go, however, but I shall constantly only go and come back again until my journey to Vichi.

I resume my letter in this place, consequently its length should not terrify you. I impatiently wait for yours; my friends at the post-office do nothing as it should be. I am very well pleased with Mons. de la Garde, he soon attracts one's affection; he is worthy of esteem upon many accounts; his behaviour convinces me that he thinks you love me; his approbation of your taste gives me the highest satisfaction. He thinks of nothing now but preparing for his departure; I should be very glad that you were to enjoy his company, and that of the handsome Abbé; you may hold your family-council with them: for my part, I think I shall set out for Livri to-morrow. Our little affair is almost finished, whereas it was to have been money to support you; la Garde will send you a grant of the festival of Sceaux.

There are two young girls of l'Islebonne, that are very pretty: their mother told Madame de Coulanges yesterday, that she would bring them to her, in order to have her approbation of them before she went to Versailles. O what a dust I raise! A mother who is young enough to be loved, who has a daughter still more amiable, and who thinks that 'tis always she herself that is courted; don't you think such an one may well say, O what a dust I raise! I think, if I was somewhat sillier than I am, I might have been such a mother: those are truly rich who understand this fable. It was our earnest desire, that you would have spoken to

the

the intendant. I laid Pother day to Mons. de Pomponne, if I had employed Mons. de M—— to exaggerate the merit of my son, he would have been thought admirably qualified ; it is true, indeed, that my style is by no means well calculated to impose upon people. 'Tis my chief care to repair our mansion houle ; Madame de Gunegaud wishes it still more ardently ; but I tremble when I think that it is an affair which depends entirely upon the pleasure of M. de Colbert ; so that if I could find any other expedient, I would avail myself of it. If we must always be at a distance from each other, it will be an high affliction to me ; for at this rate we neither see nor know each other ; we travel and fatigue ourselves ; I earnestly pray that providence may have compassion upon us. However, the three pavilions give me some consolation ; if it were not for them, how could we possibly lodge Mons. de Grignan's daughters ? I leave this letter behind, till I have received some of yours. I have lately meditated upon a certain subject : but I don't care to tell it, for it will look as if I had a mind to ape Brancas : now I mention Brancas, I should not omit telling you, that he is at present confined with his daughter, who has got the small-pox. The Princess is at Versailles.

My dear daughter, I have at last received yours of the 7th? your correspondence is divine, but surely, surely, you write too much. I am well aware, that as you are now at a distance from all your friends, you may write to several different places ; but, my dear child, I would rather you should neglect us all ; take care how you give way to the vivacity of your genius and imagination. Your vein is inexhaustible, and your letters all perfectly original ; 'tis easy to see it, and the pleasure of reading them is not to be conceived. This manner of writing, the Spaniards call disembueltado, free ; this term pleases me greatly : let us, however, practise self-denial, do you be satisfied with writing less ; and let us, on our parts, be satisfied with hearing from you less frequently. Corbinelli is very well pleased with what you say of his metaphysics, he is returned from Commerci a more profound philosopher than ever. He has highly entertained the Cardinal ; we are always talking

talking of him, and all he says, increases our friendship for his eminence. My son cannot possibly avoid going to the army: he must defer taking the waters to another opportunity. I shall go with the Abbé to Bourbilly: Guitaut will conduct me back, within a day's journey of Nevers. By that time all the roads will be clean. I shall therefore have the good man and my physician with me, so don't be under any concern about me. I am glad you are offended, as I am, with the fine compliment that is made us; let us alter our manner, that I agree to; but let us not have recourse to the abominable remedy, of a long absence; such a remedy would at last make us have no farther occasion for others. 'Tis true, I am in perplexity about a house; but what comforts me is, that Bagnole and M. de la Trousse, are in as great perplexity as myself. I don't approve of your giving Paulina to your sister-in-law *, I never liked those convents; 'tis sufficient just to hint this to you, who are both wise and prudent. If your son is strong and healthy, a rustic education is the fittest for him; if he is weak and delicate, I have heard Brayer and Bourdelot advance, that an attempt to make such children robust, generally puts an end to their lives. Don't forget what I told you with regard to his bashfulness. There never was finer weather than there is here at present; Province is now free from the north-east wind, and from excessive heat. Dear daughter, I take my leave of you, till Friday next. I wish you well, with all my heart; I can't but think that this expression is too weak, to convey an idea of my feelings, but how can I help it?

LETTER CCCCXVII.

To the same.

Livri, Friday, 16 July, 1677.

DEAR daughter, I arrived here yesterday in the evening; the weather is prodigious fine; I am quite alone, and enjoy a repose, a silence, a leisure which gives me the highest delight. Won't you allow me to

* Mary Adhernar de Monteil, a nun of the convent of Aubenas, and sister to M. de Grignan. See Molliere's forced marriage.

amuse

amuse myself by chatting with you a little? I have no sort of commerce with any body but yourself; when I write to you from Provence, I write every thing that has fallen under my observation. I can't think that you are cruel enough to say, I carry on a literary correspondence with another, because I write a letter once a week to Madame de Lavardin. Letters of business are neither long or frequent. But you, my child; are obliged to answer ten or eleven correspondents, by all of whom you are idolized, and these I have heard you reckon over and over. The subject of all their letters is the same, and yet it requires twelve to answer them: thus it happens every week, and thus are you plagued and tormented, whilst they all assure you, that they do not require an answer, only four lines, to inform them how you get your health. This is the language of them all, and of me amongst the rest; in fine, we are altogether too hard for you, but we behave with all the address and politeness of the brother in the farce, who cudgels a man with an air of complaisance, asking him pardon all the time, and saying, with the utmost respect, I am very sorry for it, Sir, but you will have it so. The application is so just, and so easily made, that I think it unnecessary to point it out.

Wednesday evening after I had wrote to you, I was invited in the kindest manner imaginable to sup at Gourville's, with Madame de Schomberg, Madame de Frontenac, and Madame des Coulanges; the Duke, M. de la Rochefoucault, Barillon, Briole, Coulanges, Sévigné; the master of the house received us in a place, which had not long before been rebuilt, it was a garden of the hotel de Conde, there were water-works, bowers, terrasses, six hautboys in one corner, six violins in another, near them the most harmonious flutes; a supper which seemed to be prepared by enchantment, an admirable base-viol, and a resplendent moon, which overhead, shone conscious of all our pleasures. If you had not an antipathy to all sorts of diversions, you would have regretted not being of the party. It is true, indeed, we might have complained of the same misfortune, which you took notice of when you were there, and which will always happen upon such occasions; that

that is to say, that very good company meets upon a sort of tacit condition, that they shall not speak a word. Barillon, Sévigné, and I, could not help laughing, for your observation immediately occurred to us. The next day, which was Thursday, I went to court, and exerted myself to well, that, as the good Abbé says, I obtained a slight injustice, after having suffered many capital pieces of injustice; by this I received two hundred louis d'ors, in part of payment of seven hundred, which I should have had eight months ago, and which, they tell me, I shall receive in winter. After this wretched expedition, I came here in the evening, in order to take a little rest, and am determined to stay till the eighth of next month, when I must prepare to set out for Burgundy and Vichi. Perhaps I may sometimes go and dine at Paris. Madame de la Fayette is a good deal better than she was. To-morrow I shall go to Pommponne; M. d'Hacqueville has been there since yesterday; I'll bring him with me hither. Your brother visits the fair one, and entertains her highly; she is naturally of a very gay disposition; all the matrons testify a regard for her. Corbinelly will come to see me in this place; he greatly approves of what you wrote to me concerning the treatise of metaphysicks, and admires your penetration in apprehending its meaning so easily. It is true, indeed, that most metaphysicians involve themselves in execrable difficulties, as well with regard to predestination, as liberty. Corbinelli decides points more boldly than any of them; but the most cautious bring themselves off with an affected profoundness, or else force their adversaries to silence, as our Cardinal does. I never in my life, met with such a strange heap of nonsense, as that in the 26th article of the last volume of the Moral Essays, in the discourse upon tempting God. This is highly diverting, but when one acknowledges the authority of the church, when their morals are uncorrupted, and 'tis done only with a view of baffling false arguments, there is no great harm, for if they were always to be silent, we should have nothing to say about them; but when they are obstinately bent upon establishing their maxims, when they translate St. Austin, for fear we should be ignorant of his meaning; when

when they endeavour to promulgate the most rigid doctrines imaginable ; and then conclude, like Father Bauni, least they should lose their right of scolding ; this makes me lose all patience, and I can't avoid doing like Corbinelli. May I die if I do not like the Jesuits much better, they are at least consistent and uniform in their doctrine, as well as their morality. Our brethren make eloquent discourses, but draw absurd conclusions ; they are not sincere ; so at last I am dipped into Escobar. You may easily perceive, daughter, that I jest and divert myself. I left Bealieu with Mons. de la Garde's painter ; he never loses sight of my original. It was not without great difficulty that I had this complaisance for Mons. de la Garde ; you will see what sort of a daub it is. I hope the last features may be better done, but yesterday it looked shockingly. This shew's an earnest desire to have a copy of that beautiful portrait of Madame de Grignan, and it would be barbarous in me to refuse it. Well then, I never did refuse it, but I am very glad I never met with so horrid a profanation of my daughter's face. This painter is a young man from Tournay, to whom M. de la Garde pays three guineas a month ; his intention at first was to employ him in painting screens, and now he is to do no less than copy Mignard. There is nothing very reasonable in such projects as these, but I shall say no more about them, as I have a great regard for the person in question. I could wish, my daughter, that you had a preceptor for your son, 'tis a pity to leave his mind uncultivated. I doubt whether he is yet of an age to eat all sorts of food promiscuously ; one should examine carefully whether children are strong and robust, before one treats them as such : one otherwise runs the hazard of spoiling their stomachs, and that is a thing of great consequence. My son has made a short stay, in order to take leave of his friends, he will come to see me afterwards ; then he must repair to the army, and after that he may go and drink the waters. An officer, named M. D—, has been lately cashiered for absenting himself : I know the answer he made, but this instance sufficiently shews the severity of military discipline. Farewel, my dear daughter ; be comforted for the loss of your child, nobody is

to

to blame concerning him. It was cutting his teeth, and not a fluxion upon the lungs, that occasioned his death: when children have not strength sufficient to force them out at a proper time, they are never able to bear the motion, which operates in order to make them all come at once. You have heard of the answer made by Guilleragues to M. des Coulanges; it is pleasant enough: Madame de Thianges told it to the King, who is greatly pleased with it; 'twas said at first that he had ruined himself by it; but there is nothing at all in that, it will perhaps make his fortune. If this discourse does not come from a green mind, it comes from a green head; 'tis just the same thing, and the colour of the troop cannot be disputed.

L E T T E R CCCCXVIII.

To the Same.

Livri, Monday, 19 July, 1677.

ON Saturday last I went to Pomponne; I there found the whole family; and besides the rest a brother of M. de Pomponne's, who had lived in solitude three years longer than M. d'Andilly. His merit and genius, which are but little thought of here, would be the admiration of another family. The great d'Hacqueville was there too; he will not return to Paris till he accompanies Madame de Vins thither; I expect them all to dine with me to-morrow. There was great laughing about the copy of your picture, which one of my footmen had represented as extremely ridiculous. They put me to the utmost confusion, when they proposed to have it done by a better hand; the battery was so strong against me, that I don't know how I shall get clear of this scrape. This is just what I was afraid of; thus are all my desires crossed; this is by no means one of the strongest; but 'tis sufficiently so, to convince me that I should not flatter myself with hopes of being gratified either in things of great or little consequence. In the evening I had thoughts of returning, and passing the night here; but there arose such a violent storm, that I must have been out of my senses to expose myself to it, except in a case of necessity. We therefore lay at Pomponne,

Pomponne, and dined there the next day, that is to say, yesterday. I there received a letter from you ; and though it was only Monday, and this will not go till Wednesday, I already begin to converse with you. I am persuaded that none of the faculty would object to my amusing myself in this manner, considering the pleasure which it gives me in my present state of indolence. You tell me great things of your health ; you sleep, you eat, you enjoy your ease : you have no duty upon your hands, no visits to pay, no mother to importune you with her love ; you have forgot that article, and it is the most important of all. In a word, my daughter, I was not allowed to be uneasy about the state you was in ; all your friends were alarmed, and I was under a necessity of appearing unmoved. I was in the wrong, to fear that the air of Provence might throw you into some disease of consequence ; you neither slept nor eat ; and seeing you disappear all on a sudden, was to be looked on as a trifle, altogether unworthy of a moment's attention. Ah my child ! when I saw you in health, did I ever once think of being uneasy about the future ? was such an apprehension ever the subject of my thoughts ? But I saw you, and thought you seized with a disorder which is very dangerous in young persons, and instead of endeavouring to comfort me, by living in a manner proper to restore you to your former state of health, I hear of nothing but your absence ; I am told, 'tis I that kill you, that 'tis I that am the cause of all your sufferings. When I consider with what caution I concealed my fears, and that notwithstanding the little that escaped me, had such a terrible effect, I take it for granted, that I am not allowed to love you ; and I affirm that things so monstrous and contradictory, are required of me, that having no longer any hopes of effecting them, nothing but the recovery of your health can extricate me from this perplexity. But, thanks be to God, the air and the tranquillity of Grignan have worked this miracle, and the joy which I feel upon that account is proportioned to my affection for you. M. de Grignan has had his wishes answered, and should be afraid of seeing me with you as he loves your life : I

*is very difficult to find a subject can
Pomponne*

can easily guess at the jests and facetious remarks that will be made by both of you upon this occasion.

I think you play a sure game ; you are in good health, as you tell me, you spend the time merrily with your husband ; how can any one make false coin of a metal so excellent ? I say nothing concerning the measures you have taken for the ensuing winter : I am well aware, that M. de Grignan must make the best use he can of the little time that is left him ; M. de Vendome is at his heels * ; you will doubtless conduct yourselves according to your own views, and you cannot take a false step. For my part, if you were in such a state of health as to be able to bear my presence, and if the son and the good Abbé were willing to pass the winter in Provence, it would give me a great deal of pleasure, and I would not desire a more agreeable retirement. You know how well satisfied I was there ; and what indeed have I to wish or to regret in the rest of the world, when I am with you, and when you enjoy your health. I will do my endeavours to prevail upon the good Abbé, and leave providence to decide. To shew you that I took care to deliver your letter to Corbinelli, I here send you his answer.

Mons. de Corbinelli.

No, madam, I will not blame your mother, she does not deserve it, but you do. How could you imagine, that she desires you should be as plump as Madame de Castelnau ? Is there no medium between your excessive leanness and a lump of fat ? You are entirely upon extremes. You resemble a certain person, whom a devout Bishop refused to ordain priest. What then would you have me do, Sir, answered he, would you have me rob upon the highway ? Should a prodigy of genius reason in this manner ? Then what motive can you have, to cause a dispute between Mons. de Grignan and Madame de Sévigné ? There cannot be a more droll image than your cascade of fears, the reverberation of which plagued you all three. This may have dangerous con-

* M. de Vendome was Governor of Provence, and when he arrived there, M. de Grignan constantly set out for Grignan, or for court.

sequences, prevent them, madam, and all will be well. You fancy that your mother is out of order, she is not, she is in good health. She is not afraid of being with child, but she is afraid of growing too fat. Do you, on the contrary, be apprehensive of becoming with child, and wish to grow fatter. I am not satisfied with you, I think you by no means reasonable, I am sorry that I am your master. If the great Des Cartes knew this, he would prevent your soul from being green, and you would be highly mortified at its being black, or of any other colour. I saw at Commerci a prodigy of merit and virtue; this should be a motive to you, to be as careful of your health, as you were formerly negligent of it, when you gave me the mock title of plenipotentiary. Farewel, madam, I am, &c.

Madame de Sévigné.

Thus he writes to you; you see plainly that I neither add to, nor retrench from, his letter. I talked a great deal about a preceptor to a certain inhabitant of Port Royal; he knows of none: if any offers in his cell, he will not fail to give me notice. I should be glad to see this little Marquis; and I should be glad to stroke the plump cheeks of Paulina; how pretty I think her; I am sure she will be very like you; a white head of hair, which curls naturally is a great beauty; love her, love her, my daughter, you have loved your mother long enough: to continue to love me now, would only be the cause of vexation to you; what are you afraid of? Constrain your inclinations no longer, transfer your affection to her; I am convinced that you will derive great pleasure from thence. Bagnole* set out to-day. I wrote to my son to desire him, if he has not died of grief, to come and dine with the whole family of the Pomponnes. He will be better off than M. de Grignan, who thinks himself quite abandoned, because he had but three mistresses at Aix, all of whom proved false to him: one can't be too well provided with them, he that has but three has none; I understand all he tells me upon that head. My son is thoroughly convinced of this truth; I make no doubt but he has above six left; I would lay any wager that none of them will die

* The sister of Madame des Coulanges.

of a malignant fever, he has chosen them so well of late. You see I commit all sorts of trifles to paper as well as you. I am very glad to find that the parliament of Aix has not proved ungrateful to M. de Grignan; I remember very well how he was received the year that I was there. With regard to the first president, when they are satisfied with closing his letter, they change their opinion before the post arrives at Lyons. But this is certain, that the whole province has a great affection and respect for M. de Grignan. My dear child, permit me in this place to declare my love and tenderness for you. I shall not finish this letter till Wednesday.

Wednesday, July 21.

The whole family of the Pomponnes came and dined with us yesterday. My son came hither from Paris; we passed the day very agreeably. Madame de Vins, and d'Haquerville, staid with us; they will not set out till this evening. We had a great deal of conversation concerning Isis, it is impossible to conjecture in what manner her unhappy fate will terminate.

Great Jove my sufferings cause at length to cease *.

If she could address this prayer to the god, and he would vouchsafe to hear it, it would be an apotheosis for her. Your conjecture was very just, the † Fly can't yet quit the court; when one has certain engagements there, one is not free. Bagnole is departed, Mousse is gone with her: if you could prevail upon him to go to Grignan, in order to give some good instruction to the Marquis, it would be happy for you, and he would think himself happy in seeing you.

LETTER CCCCXIX.

To the same.

Livri, Wednesday Evening, July 21, 1677.

LOVE Paulina, love Paulina, daughter, indulge yourself in that amusement, don't destroy your peace of mind by depriving yourself of her; what are you afraid of? You may notwithstanding send her to a convent for a few years, when you think it necessary.

* See the Opera of Isis. † M. des Coulanges.

Enjoy maternal affection for a while, one must find it exquisite when it springs from the heart, and when the choice lights upon an amiable object.

Methinks I see that young creature even here, she will be a likeness, notwithstanding the workman's mark. 'Tis true, this nose is a strange affair; but it will mend, and I'll answer for her, Paulina will be handsome. Madame de Vins is still here, she is now in my closet, engaged in conversation with d'Hacqueville and my son. The last has so bad a heel, that he may perhaps go to Bourbon, when I go to Vichi. Don't be under any concern about this journey, and since it is not the will of heaven, that I should enjoy the sweets of your friendship, we must yield obedience to its will; this is a mortifying consideration, but we are the weakest, and to attempt resistance is in vain. I should be too happy, if your friendship was in reality such as it appears to be; it is still extremely dear to me, tho' divested of all the charms and pleasures, which your presence and company bestow upon it. My son and I will answer all you have said concerning epic poetry. The contempt, I know he has, for Æneas, makes me apprehensive, that he will be of your opinion. Yet all the great wits have a taste for every thing that is wrote by an ancient. You will soon have la Garde and the handsome Abbé with you; there was great talk here, concerning our views with regard to your little daughter: Madame de Vins assures me, that all depends upon her father, and that when they receive the baby, they will do wonders. We thought proper, that we might not be obliged to wait, to send you a rent-roll of my son's fortune, and of his expectations, that you may shew it to the intend-ant, that we may know his pleasure, without suffering all the delays and all the instructions, which must be borne with, if you don't make the truth appear to him; but he should be told the truth in such a manner, that nothing should be left him to retrench, as is generally done, for should he suspect any exaggeration, the whole treaty is at an end. Our stile is so simple, and so different from that of marriage contracts, that except people do us the honour to believe us implicitly, we never conclude any thing: 'tis true, you are at liberty to

to seek information, and herein frankness and simplicity find their account. In a word, my daughter, we earnestly recommend this affair to you, and above all, to give a categorical answer, that we may not lose a great deal of time about a visionary project. As I propose writing to you again next Friday, I shall now return to my company.

LETTER CCCCXX.

To the Same.

Livri, Friday, 23 July, 1677.

THE Baron is here, and does not let me rest a moment, with such rapidity does he hurry me on in the studies which we have undertaken: *Don Quixote*, *Lucian*, and your little letters, furnish us our chief amusement. I could wish, with all my heart, my daughter, that you had seen with what an air, and what a tone of voice, he acquires himself in reading the last: they acquire a new value in passing through his hands; there is something exquisite in his manner, both in the serious and the gay; they every time entertain you full as well as the indefectibility of matter. I work, whilst he reads, and we are so commodiously situated for a walk, that one thinks nothing of going ten times into the garden, and returning ten times from thence.

I think I shall just go to Paris, from whence I will bring Corbinelli; but I shall quit this quiet and peaceable desert, and set out the 16th of August for Burgundy and Vichi. Don't be under any concern about my taking the waters; as it is not the will of God that I should go thither in your company, we must think of nothing but submission to his decrees. I endeavour to console myself by the consideration that you sleep, eat, enjoy your ease, are no longer preyed upon by a thousand uneasy thoughts, that your beautiful face recovers its attractive charms, and that your breast is no longer that of a person, wasted away with a consumption: 'tis in these changes, that I hope to find an alleviation of what I suffer, by being deprived of your company: when the hope of seeing you joins with these thoughts, it shall be very welcome, and will hold its place among

them admirably. I suppose M. de Grignan is with you, I heartily congratulate him upon his good success; I know how he is received in Provence, and am not in the least surprised at his being highly beloved. I recommend Paulina to his care, and intreat him to defend her against your philosophy. Don't deprive yourselves of so agreeable an amusement; alas! the choice of our pleasures is not often in our power. When a pleasure that's innocent and agreeable to nature, happens to fall in our way, I think we should not be so cruel to ourselves, as to let it escape us. I must therefore sing once more;

Love Paulina, love Paulina,

Love her grace divine *

We shall wait at St. Remi, to know what Madame de Guenegaud will be able to do for her house; if she shall have done nothing by that time, we shall take proper measures ourselves, and look out for one against Christmas; it will indeed give me great concern to lose all hopes of living in the same house with you; perhaps we may discover the meaning of all this, when we least expect it. I apprehend that M. de la Garde will shortly set out, I shall take my leave of him at Paris; thus will you acquire additional good company. Mons. de Chazot wrote to me, that he might have an opportunity of speaking of you, he pays you a thousand compliments. I believe, daughter, we shall agree pretty well in our opinions concerning epic poetry; the Tinsel of Tasso has charmed me. I fancy, however, you will not dislike Virgil: Corbinelli has made me admire him; you should have somebody like him to accompany you in that voyage. I am going to begin the schism of the Greeks, I have heard it very well spoken of, I would advise la Garde to carry it to you. I don't hear any manner of news.

Mons. de Sévigné.

Oh groveling genius! Not like Homer? The most perfect works of human wit to, you appear contemptible: natural beauties lose all their effect upon you;

* Parody upon a verse in the opera of Theseus. Act 2d, Scene 1st.

and

and nothing will go down but Tinsel or Corpuscles*. If you have not a mind to break with me entirely, don't read Virgil; I could never forgive you the ill you may say of him. However, if you were to get the 6th book explained to you, together with the 9th, which contains the episode of Nisus and Euryalus, as also the 11th and 12th, I am sure you would be highly pleased with them. Turnus would appear to you worthy of your esteem; and, to be plain with you, as I know your character thoroughly, I should be very much concerned for Mons. de Grignan, if a person like him was to land in Provence; but, as a good brother, I prefer your interests to his, and from the bottom of my heart wish you some such adventure; since it is predestined that your head must be turned by something, it is much better it should be turned by a love intrigue, than by the indefectibility of matter, and the non-convertible negations. It is a melancholy thing to be taken up entirely with atoms and reasonings so subtle, that it is scarce possible to comprehend them; and if you speak to me of your return a hundred years hence, I shall say no more than what I have said already: maturely weigh all things, and don't prefer your duty to Provence, to the duty you owe this country, except there should be reasons so cogent as to force assent from every body. I shall learn from the accident which has happened to Mons. de Grignan, to avoid the like misfortune; of three mistresses which he had, there is not one left; I am resolved to contrive it so, as to have mistresses of every sort, insomuch that they shall not all be liable to the necessity of ravelling. To conclude, it would be something extraordinary, if I should be indebted to you ~~as~~^{for} a wife; there's no more wanting to make your sister compleatly different from other sisters, and nothing but such a close can properly answer what you have done already upon my account. Be that as it will, I assure you, my dear sister, that my gratitude and tenderness towards you will always be the same.

* Madame de Grignan was very fond of the Cartesian philosophy, which she made her chief study.

Madame de Sévigné.

The Fly is at court, 'tis a fatigue to her, but it cannot be helped. M. de Schomberg * is still at the Meuse with his handful of men, that is to say, he is still alone tête à tête. Madame des Coulanges said t'other day, that the command of that army should be given to Mons. des Coulanges. When I see the Maréchal's lady, I will give her your compliments. The Prince of Condé is still in his deified state at Chantilly; there he surpasses all the heroes celebrated by Hoiner. You make them appear extremely ridiculous: we agree with you, that this mixture of gods and men is altogether extravagant: but we must respect the profound father Bossu. Madame de la Fayette begins to take broth without being sick, it was this that made us apprehensive of her being dried up.

LETTER CCCCXXI.

To the Same.

Livri, Monday, 26 July, 1677.

MONS. de Sévigné is (it seems) to learn from Mons. de Grignan, the necessity of having several mistresses, on account of the inconveniences which arise from having but two or three: but M. de Grignan should learn from M. de Sévigné the pangs of separation, when one of them happens to go off by the stage-coach. The lover, on the day of departure, receives a letter which gives him great uneasiness, because it is conceived in terms extremely tender; this disturbs the gaiety and freedom which he expected to enjoy.

He then receives a second letter from the place where his mistress lies the first night; this puts ~~hold~~ quite out of patience. What the devil, is this to last long? Thus this grief has been represented to me; the lover relies entirely upon the journey which the husband is to make, thinking that this great regularity must necessarily be interrupted; were it otherwise, one could

* The Maréchal de Schomberg remained almost alone, with a small part of his army, which was reduced nearly to nothing by the different detachments that had been made from it, in order to augment that of the Maréchal de Crequi.

not

not carry on an intrigue three days in a week. Answers and tender reflections are strained from the brains with much difficulty ; the letter is botched up, as I said, before invention is half delivered, the source is entirely dried up. He laughs, as well as I, at the style and orthography. I shall cite you some strokes which you will know immediately.

I depart at length, what a voyage is this ! Who is it that reduces me to such an extremity ? I would readily have answered her, for an ungrateful man. I have received a letter from my sister, in terms as tender as those you should write me ; she is softened by my departure. I was all the day sad, pensive, my heart oppressed, I sigh'd, languished, and felt an inquietude which I could not surmount.

It seems to me to be a thing altogether inconsistent, and contradictory to enter that stage coach, with an amorous languor and a languishing heart. How can one conceive that a state, calculated to make one pass the day in a shady wood, seated on the border of a fountain, under a spreading beech, can possibly suit with the violent motion of that carriage ? In my opinion, anger, rage, jealousy, revenge, would be much better adapted to that manner of travelling.

But in fine, I have confidence enough in you, to believe that you have not forgot me. Alas ! if you knew the condition in which I am, you would think that I deserved very well of you, and you would treat me according to my deserts. I already begin to wish myself back again : I defy you to believe that it is not upon your account. I shall neither find joy nor repose upon my arrival. Think at least of the tasteless and insipid life I am going to lead. Farewel, if you love me, you do not love one that is ungrateful.

Here is the fragment, which I came by accidentally, and in this stile is your brother condemned to answer three times a week. Take my word for it, daughter, that must be a great plague. Such a wager as this, these poor people have resolved to make good ; 'tis a downright torment, they excite my compassion ; the poor lad could never bear such a fatigue, were it not

for the consolation he finds in me. 'Tis a great loss to you, my dear child, that you are not in the way of the same intimacy. I exceed the limits of my letter to write you this, my view is to entertain you, by giving you an idea of the agreeable intercourse that subsists between us.



END of the FIFTH VOLUME